~~55860~~
1963

WOOLWICH CENTRAL

The card in this pocket must NOT be removed.

If this book is not returned to the library on or before the last date shown on the card above a fine will be charged in accordance with the Libraries' Regulations.

Please quote the number and the last date stamped on the card if you wish to renew the book by post or telephone.

MON.—FRI. ... ... 9 a.m.—8 p.m.
SAT. ... ... 9 a.m.—5 p.m.

WOOLWICH LIBRARIES

CONTEMPORARY FRENCH LITERATURE

BY

RENÉ LALOU

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

WILLIAM ASPENWALL BRADLEY

WOOLWICH
PUBLIC
LIBRARIES.

LONDON
JONATHAN CAPE, LIMITED
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE

FIRST PUBLISHED, 1925

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

WOOLWICH
PUBLIC
LIBRARIES.
~~1963~~
8LIO-9
35860

FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

When the present work appeared in France in November, 1922, it was the first general study of recent French literature, and it has remained the only one so far. I may, perhaps, be permitted to mention the fact that this attempt has met with some success, seeing that the success of such a book is due much less to the writer than to those it was written for. In undertaking it, my intention was to render faithfully the successive phases of a spiritual drama, to follow the artistic adventures of French thought through half a century. I wanted at once to present the reader with a panoramic picture, showing what a rich crop of talents may be garnered in contemporary French literature, and to insist upon great figures, giving our protagonists their due. I wanted, moreover, to indicate the continuity of the creative effort during this period, indicating the growth of one movement out of another, by action or reaction, and stressing the vigorous vitality of the movement itself, rather than its artificial division into schools. Life is deeper than dogmatism. I have tried to follow life faithfully, looking at it closely until some order appeared, rather than accepting any order imposed upon it from without. Hence I have frequently painted several portraits of the same author when his influence was felt in different fields and have, throughout, dwelt upon such facts as bore witness, under the necessary division into chapters, to the unity of my subject. It has been my reward that many should have regarded my book as a living organism.

Although useful as a text-book, the work was primarily intended for the general reader. It was also designed to serve a foreign as well as a French public. The French preface said this explicitly. Many foreign critics have warmly praised a book not planned from a strictly national point of view. In France, all reviewers were not equally satisfied; but, as I wanted aid rather than commendation, I derived the former even from such attacks as were not entirely disinterested. So I was able to bring out, in February, 1924, a new French edition of the book, *revue et augmentée.*

The English version is the work of an editor* and of a translator

* Certain cuts were made in the French text for the purpose of this translation by Mr. Ernest Boyd.

whose names are a guarantee of competence and accuracy. It follows closely the revised French edition which may now be said to be quite complete. Nothing essential has been omitted in this English version; and if certain chapters have been reduced in length, mainly by the abridgment of extended poetic analyses, while certain lists and summaries have been suppressed, this has been done to bring out in a sharper, clearer light the great lines of the drama, with the importance of the principal actors.

R. L.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

FOREWORD v

CHAPTER I. LITERARY INFLUENCES IN 1871 3

1. The Liquidation of Romanticism 3
2. New Influences 7

CHAPTER II. *LE PARNASSE* 17

1. The Masters of *Le Parnasse* 17
2. The Foothills of *Le Parnasse* 26

CHAPTER III. REALISM 28

1. Realism and Naturalism 28
2. The Naturalistic Novel: The Goncourts 28
3. Alphonse Daudet 32
4. Emile Zola 34
5. Guy de Maupassant 38
6. J.-K. Huysmans 42
7. Jules Renard 45
8. Naturalism in the Theatre 49

CHAPTER IV. THE ANTI-NATURALISTIC REACTION 52

1. Influences. Barbey d'Aurevilly 52
2. Idealism. Villiers de l'Isle-Adam 55
3. The Psychological Novel. Paul Bourget 60
4. Maurice Barres and *le Culte du Moi* 62
5. Anatole France and Intellectual Fantasy 67
6. Pierre Loti and Exoticism 71
7. The Romantic and Regionalistic Novel 74
8. The Moral and Social Novel 76

CHAPTER V. ORIGINS OF THE CONTEMPORARY DRAMA 80

1. François de Curel and the Drama of Ideas 80
2. The Psychological Drama 84
3. The Problem Play 88
4. Light Comedy 89
5. Verse Drama 91

PAGE

CHAPTER VI. SYMBOLISM 94

1. The Symbolist Movement 94
2. Three Precursors 96
3. Arthur Rimbaud 101
4. Paul Verlaine 110
5. Stéphane Mallarmé 118
6. The Symbolist School 127
7. The Poets of the North 136
8. From Symbolism to Classicism 142
9. The Symbolist Drama 147
10. Schwob and Gourmont 150
11. Conclusion 157

CHAPTER VII. TRADITIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM 159

1. Counter-Revolution and Naturalism 159
2. Revolutionary Spirit and Internationalism 173
3. Internationalism and Nationalism 190
4. Charles Péguy 197

CHAPTER VIII. CONTEMPORARY POETRY 208

1. Romantics and Symbolists 209
2. The Traditionalistic Poets 213
3. Feminine Romanticism 216
4. The Intimists 220
5. The Fantasists 223
6. From the Cubists to the Dadaists 227
7. Philosophical and Social Poetry 236
8. Jules Romains and the Abbaye 241
9. Paul Claudel and Paul Valéry 253

CHAPTER IX. THE CONTEMPORARY DRAMA 271

1. The Psychological Drama 271
2. The Play 276
3. Social Satire 280
4. Comedy 282
5. Verse Drama and Plays by Poets 284

CHAPTER X. THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL 287

1. The Story-Tellers 287
2. The Artistic Novel 291
3. Exoticism and Adventure 296
4. The Novel of Imagination 302
5. The War Novel 305
6. The Social Novel: Observation and Satire 310
7. The Provincial and Regionalistic Novel 321
8. The Analytical Novel 325
9. The Women Novelists 330

PAGE

CHAPTER XI. SOME TENDENCIES 336

1. From Stendhal to Gobineau 336
2. Intelligence and Intuition 340
3. Art and the People 344
4. The Ego and the Universe 351
5. André Gide 359

CHAPTER XII. CONCLUSION 370

1. Criticism 370
2. Revues, Journalists and Orators 373
3. History 374
4. Philosophy 376

APPENDICES: . . . . . .

A. Notes on the Abbaye by René Arcos 379
B. General Works to be Consulted 382
C. Bibliographical List 383

ALPHABETICAL INDEX 397

CONTEMPORARY FRENCH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

LITERARY INFLUENCES IN 1871

1. THE LIQUIDATION OF ROMANTICISM

IF the Franco-German War of 1870–71 marks the end of one period and the beginning of another in the political history of France, the break is less definite as regards its literary history.

For the War of 1870 was military rather than economic. The whole nation was not involved. Certain details were well qualified to strike the imagination of the writers, but its duration was too short to inspire more than occasional works, to evoke from them other than brief echoes. *L'Année terrible* adds no more to Hugo's literary production than *Le Dormeur du Val* to Rimbaud's. Whether the reaction be book or sonnet, it remains in each case momentary, limited to a few patriotic poems or plays.

The Restoration and the July Monarchy had seen the birth and the triumph of Romanticism, overthrowing classical literature as the Revolution had overthrown traditional politics. Under the Second Empire, Baudelaire, Leconte de Lisle, Taine, Renan, Flaubert, however different in other ways, concurred in reacting against this Romanticism. With the fall of the Empire coincided the disappearance of several of the representative names of Romanticism. Lamartine and Sainte-Beuve died in 1869, Mérimée and Dumas in 1870, Gautier in 1872. It was among the adversaries of Romanticism that the generation which entered upon its literary life about 1871 had chosen its masters. The war, even the defeat, did not cause it to lose any of its artistic lucidity. In its eyes, the most urgent necessity was to finish the work its guides had begun, to continue the liquidation of Romanticism.

Romanticism was liquidated, but with the burning of incense, almost with the deification of the last and most illustrious of its leaders. Hugo's fame, after 1870, like Voltaire's in his last years, was not purely literary. The poet who had personified irreducible resistance to imperial usurpation returned to France in an apotheosis. He had fifteen years left to go from the Arc de Triomphe to the Panthéon.

WOOLWICH PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

His influence on the mind of his contemporaries was, however, due rather to the admiration they felt for the person of a recognized and licensed genius, for a kind of official bard, the gigantic survivor of a past epoch, than to the wonder of new poetic conquests in the works which poured from his pen. In *Les Contemplations*, *Les Châtiments* and the first series of *La Légende des siècles*, Hugo had attained the three summits, lyric, satiric, and epic, of his genius. The poems of the last fifteen years play on the same themes with a constantly renewed virtuosity but bring no fresh affirmation either in the form or in the subject. More than ever the "I" parades itself without reserve, without discipline, without choice, whether apropos of the puerile incidents recounted in *L'Art d'être grand-père* or the prophecies terminating *La Légende des siècles*. More than ever Hugo's works, whether they be called novels like *Quatre-vingt-treize* or dramas like *Torquemada*, are vast monologues in which the poet blesses or curses.

For the essential trait of this poetry is to take sides. With advancing years Hugo's vision had become, if not enlarged, at least simplified. The Shadow strives by every means to hold back humanity in its progress towards the Light. Such are his metaphysics. The champions of the Light are saints. The partisans of the Shadow are diabolical. Such is his psychology. *Le Pape* is constructed on such a series of mad, naïvely obvious antitheses which inspired Hugo alternately with meditations verging on the grotesque (*En voyant une nourrice*) and admirable lyrical verse (*En voyant passer des brebis tondues*). *La Pitié suprême* develops the same gospel of universal pity—all must be pitied, even tyrants—and of love. It is this same conception of the world which *L'Ane* expounds to Kant in a series of cock-and-bull stories which its title does not suffice to justify and which, however, remain one of Hugo's essential traits. In *Religions et Religion* is found, side by side with apocalyptic pretensions the sincerity of which disarms all irony, an awakening of the old picaresque spirit which created Don César de Bazan:

Dieu s'est laissé tomber dans son fauteuil Voltaire

. . . . . .

Et n'étant plus bon Dieu tâche d'être bon diable.

We must not blame this enormous *sans-gêne* which preserves God and his high-priest from silliness.

Les Quatre vents de l'esprit forms the apogee of this last period and Hugo's poetic testament. Herein are found all his weaknesses which

spring essentially from the simplicist and antithetical philosophy he cannot refrain from lending to all his characters, and from his incapacity for seeing the center of the world elsewhere than in himself. His poetry therefore is almost always occasional poetry, whether in the higher sense of the word when he undertakes to denounce the crimes of humanity—the death penalty, for example—or those responsible for human slavery—kings and priests for the most part—or, under a pettier aspect when, replying to personal enemies, he enters upon unending polemics and voluminous justifications stuffed with topical allusions already requiring a glossary.

To the very end, however, Hugo kept his prodigious qualities. Under his gaze objects grew animated, fertilizing his brain in return with a harvest of images, metaphors, comparisons, symbols, where the sublime and the ridiculous are inextricably entangled. Irony overflows in *Le Livre satirique* with the same abundance as oratorical development in *Le Livre lyrique.* It is possible to smile at the melodramatic turn in the *Deux trouvailles de Gallus.* It is impossible to deny the verbal power which swells these tirades, making up for the flimsiness of the characters, creating an atmosphere where the question of truth, even of verisimilitude, no longer presents itself, where the human voice seems to equal those great voices of nature—murmurs of the sea, whisperings of the wind, which are less the music of an epoch or of a country than a kind of confused hymn to all earthly beauty.

None of the young poets of the time refused Hugo his incense, but they went for lessons to Leconte de Lisle, the poet whose work and thought offered them a model of devotion to pure art, of obedience to unalterable principles. Twenty years later he had nothing to retract from the preface to *Poèmes antiques* where, in 1852, he judged Romanticism "a second-hand art, hybrid and incoherent, a noisy comedy played for the benefit of a borrowed self-worship." He predicted its immediate decline. "We are a learned generation," he continued. "Art and science should tend to unite closely, if not to become one." Presenting *Poèmes antiques* to the public, he opposed the lyric rage of his rivals with "the impersonality and the neutrality of these studies."

He was, moreover, by no means so neutral as he pretended. Returning, in the preface to *Poèmes et Poésies* (1855), to his former declarations, with the intention of confirming or, if need be, of reenforcing them, he wrote that the modern era leaves poets no other choice than silence or "the necessity of annihilating their nature to the

profit of some monstrous alliance between poetry and industry." "It is for this reason," he concluded, "I hate my epoch." In spite of his concern for objectivity, this hatred betrayed itself in his poems and his "neutrality" was rather an inverted partiality; but it permitted him to maintain a dignified attitude in the face of the chiefs of the Romanticism he dethroned. It was known no petty jealousy actuated him when he reproached Vigny with having conceived his Moses as a symbol without bothering about his historical verisimilitude. He was not open to the suspicion of disparagement when he asserted that Lamartine would have been great had he not lacked "love and religious respect for Art." His creative work was contained in three thin volumes. Nevertheless he was to have the right, in 1887, replacing Hugo in the Academy, to meet the Titan on equal terms. Noting, with a sure touch, that the author of *La Légende des siècles* "merely borrows from history and legend settings more interesting in themselves through which to develop the passions and hopes of his time," he defined, by the comparison, his own conception of art, diametrically opposed to Hugo's, but shared by all those who were weary of the tide of verbal egotism which, for half a century, had been submerging Europe.

Not that Leconte de Lisle himself brought any surprise to his admirers. *Les Poèmes tragiques* continued the *Antiques* and the *Barbares* with the same formal magnificence, the same sternly serene visions (*L'Albatros, La Chasse de l'aigle*) expressed in marmorean verse. At most could be occasionally discerned a trace of emotion (*Les Roses d'Ispahan, Le Parfum impérissable*) in this impassibility. Perhaps a malicious critic might have enjoyed stressing the rancour of the old democrat, hostile to obscurantism, who, even while borrowing from the Middle Ages its picturesqueness (*Dona Blanca, Hiéronymus, Le Lévrier de Magnus*), denounced its cruelties with a violence equal to Hugo's (*Les Siècles maudits*) ; but the essential element of this third panel of the triptych was no more such revolt than it was the occasional poems on the *Sacre de Paris*. What Leconte de Lisle's pupils wanted to learn from him was the art of plenitude, the art of the definitive verse and of the perfect stanza where the affirmation weighs less by virtue of its intellectual value than of its sovereign rhythm.

It would not, moreover, be just to attribute to all the Romantics a Lamartine's scorn for syntax and a Musset's poetical negligences. Théophile Gautier, painter-poet, had exalted eternal art and carried the religion of form as far as Leconte de Lisle himself; but already his disciple Banville had shown the ditch into which poetry, thus under-

stood, was in danger of falling. Hugo had sometimes amused himself, as a sort of pastime, with the pursuit of the *rime riche*, not perhaps in despite of sense, but for the sake of the unexpected senses it suggests to the adventurous poet. It became Banville's unique preoccupation and lends his poems an air of often clown-like improvisation.

Warned by this example, the young poets, after a formal homage to Hugo, maintained, with respect to the masters of the preceding generation, a reserve not altogether free from hostility. Their sympathy and their confidence they accorded fully to Leconte de Lisle alone who, twenty years earlier, had defined their aspirations and declared war, in their name, against all forms of romantic grandiloquence.

2. NEW INFLUENCES

If, however, the Jeunes of 1870 deliberately dismissed names regarded as glorious, they were, in return, enthusiastic over writers whom their contemporaries disregarded or to whom, at least, had not been rendered full justice.

Charles Baudelaire was the precursor for the poets of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. All, by turns, were able to claim the author of *Fleurs du Mal* as one of theirs. Because he had been passionately modern, because no refinement of his epoch left him indifferent, Baudelaire saw minds of the utmost diversity gravitate towards him. He is great, not by the abundance of his work but by the number of goals and points of departure it implies. Hugo aims to derive the greatest number of variations from a given theme. Baudelaire, inversely, strives to evoke, in a few chords, in a quintessential music, the greatest possible number of intellectual or sentimental themes. He revives the classical development on poetic immortality (*Je te donne ces vers*), renewing it with the hint of a strange mysticism. *Bénédiction* treats the romantic motive of the unrecognized artist but, instead of the expected revolt, ends in suave swinging of the censer. Although he can praise paganism and the "nude epochs," Christianity has no secrets for him. He has kept its soaring prayer, its searchings of conscience, its struggles with the Tempter in which the wrestling is at once so strenuous and so agreeable. He has kept its love of the beautiful spreading hierarchy, of the hymns in the impassioned Latin of the Decadence (*Franciscæ meæ laudes*), and its sensual taste for the intoxication of myrrh, spikenard and incense. Gautier did not more highly exalt Beauty, Queen of the world. Leconte de Lisle and the Parnassians produced nothing more formally impeccable than *Le Chant d'Automne*. The poem, *La Servante au grand cœur*, unites the most profound sentiment with the easiest conversational style. At

the moment when realism and idealism were about to start a new struggle the stake of which was artistic supremacy, Baudelaire had written *La Charogne* in which the two inspirations are so curiously blended. The sickly poems which apparently added one more string to his lyre and a shiver to the soul were not really the most revolutionary of the collection. Those for which this title should be reserved are the ones where, apropos of an artistic impression (*Une Martyre*), a commonplace meeting (*Une Passante*), an hour of reverie (*Recueillement*), he suddenly illumines the most secret places of the human heart—the ones where his thought recovers (*La Chevelure, Correspondances*), under various symbolical aspects of Beauty, the ways which lead the spirit to still other symbols—the ones where, through the perfection of the rhythm (*Harmonie du Soir*), or through his originality (*Invitation au voyage*), he preludes the music, alternately precise and elusive, which will be elected by two generations of poets.

Doubtless these are the heights, and criticisms which are not unjustified have been addressed to Baudelaire. In spite of the probity of his work, weaknesses abound: abuse of commonplaces (rhetoric jars in him even more than in any other poet), insipid verses, obscurities, indigent correctness of writing. He has been accused of not being a poet born, on the plea that certain of his *Poèms en prose* are superior to poems treating the same subject in verse. The truth is that, in both domains, he creates for himself, constantly, his instrument. This effort explains many of the inequalities. A more serious reproach is the want of sustained power so characteristic of his work. A sonnet like *Correspondances*, after the most admirable beginning, runs out. The idea of the unity of life which expresses itself in rhythmical correspondences fills the mind with such sublimity that the example of the perfumes seems a little trivial to crown the vision of an enlarged universe.

Yet this discrimination—which has, moreover, left Baudelaire in the first rank of French poets—could not be expected of those who, about 1870, hailed him as a master. Celebrated by the Parnassians, he was the initiator of the original Symbolists. His influence has not ceased to be active. His entire lucidity, the sureness of his judgment, the *Phares* or his studies on Poe, had borne ample witness to it. His *Lettres* multiplied the proofs. He was the first Frenchman to place Wagner intelligently, and his articles on this subject remain models. He outdistanced all his contemporaries. Denouncing the artifices of Hugo and of Leconte de Lisle, he threw new light upon the subtleties of Sainte-Beuve and the books in which Gérard de Nerval had

interwoven the threads of dream and of life. For half a century there has not been a single stir of artistic sensibility of which Baudelaire did not at least indicate the first thrill.

"I shall be understood about 1880," Stendhal had said. The term fixed by him approached and his influence was increasing, precisely as he had predicted in this sally which mingled a little pique with considerable lucidity. Stendhal's novels make indeed many concessions to the ambient Romanticism: litter of romantic adventures, frequent *coups de théâtre*, inordinate digressions, Napoleonic enthusiasm and, above all, choice of exceptional subjects and characters. These external traits did not, however, suffice to give them a really Romantic aspect. It was too clearly felt that the spirit animating them was attached to a different, if not a conflicting tradition. There is nothing astonishing in their slight success among his contemporaries, Balzac and Mérimée excepted.

There is nothing astonishing, either, in the admiration they excited in Taine here followed by the new generation. Did not Stendhal, through his worship of individualism and of energy, save everything in Romanticism which was not momentary caprice or false liberty, a real claim to inalienable human right? To all those whom half a century's worship of the ego had for ever given the obsession of human originality, he appeared as a precursor, a guide the more trustworthy through having clad this exaltation in a form cold, detached from its theme, as objective as the *Code civil*, which could, in literary language, be called scientific.

His was a strange fortune, this belated disciple of the ideologists, a great or a mediocre writer according to the standpoint of the critic, a profound connoisseur of the human heart or a self-limited psychologist according to the angle from which he is considered, capable of indifferent irony with regard to masterpieces and of puerile rapture over a second-rate opera, a prodigious mystifier caught in his own snares in wit as well as in life, and it is hard to say, in the last analysis, whether he owes more disciples to his dilettantism or to his naïveté. For, if these contradictions hurt him in his own epoch, he was marvellously able to employ them to prepare his fame, to the extent of recruiting his most fervent admirers among those who saw through him most clearly, and of imposing upon his true devotees a flattering bond of complicity.

For he is very great. No man took more pride in seeing clearly, but no man took more pains to describe exactly what he saw. If he, too, has remained, for fifty years, one of the masters of French thought, if his fame has become European, it is because, in the most

romantic of settings, he possessed that most precious of classical qualities, discipline, with patient submission to the truth. Minute analyst, he was not ashamed of the abrupt about-faces by which really human heroes escape, unforeseeably, from their creator himself. However susceptible to diverse interpretation the teaching of his work may have been, no ambiguity is possible as to the lesson of intellectual lucidity he gave his successors when he wrote: "I can conceive that one may not like to look at the real; but in that case one must not reason about it. Above all, one must not construct objections out of the various pieces of one's ignorance."

The real. It was to the scrupulous patient representation of the real that Gustave Flaubert devoted himself with a passion which brought the two men in him into conflict: "There are," he wrote, "two distinct men in me, one who is in love with bellowing, with lyricism, with great eagle-flights, with all the sonorities of the phrase and with the summits of the idea; another who digs and delves into the true as deeply as he can, who loves to bring out the little fact as powerfully as the big, who would like to make you feel almost materially the things he reproduces." (*Correspondance*, January, 1852, to Mme. X.) Now, in *Madame Bovary*, published in 1857, this almost material word-painting, accused of indecency, had brought him before his country's courts. In 1870, he no longer had to dread a similar danger. *L'Education sentimentale* found a public ready to welcome it with enthusiasm. "To bring out the little fact as powerfully as the big" might be the motto of this novel whose heroes and readers await, from beginning to end, a big event which never arrives, while the stream of commonplace actions, constituting the ordinary routine of most lives, flows minutely, inexorably on. No work has had more influence on contemporary novelists. It may be said, without exaggeration, that this perfect success has haunted them and that, for a while, at least, *L'Education sentimentale* was regarded as the type of the realistic novel—that is to say, the modern novel—in which the depicting of the world attains an all but scientific precision.

In 1874, in accordance with the two-beat rhythm dear to him, Flaubert published the third—and definitive—version of *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*. The Romantic in him had taken its revenge on lyricism and sublime flights. Before the recluse of the Thebais, he had deployed the procession of all the temptations, the train of the desires of the flesh, the pack of the mind's hallucinations; but the realist had intervened in this series of visions. The nightmare was only an appearance. The general composition was ordered by a sure hand.

Nothing, in the detail, was left to improvisation. This magnificent musical prose cloaked a most scrupulously erudite work comparable to the patient researches upon which Leconte de Lisle prided himself and exposed to the same criticisms.

For if the idealization of a living society is open to the reproaches of the artist's contemporaries, the realistic painting of a past epoch risks appearing very naïve to future and better-informed generations. Thus it is not upon this part of his work that the systematic devotees of Flaubert base his surest fame. Yet any picture of Flaubert is unjustly false which isolates one of the two aspects of this great worker. They must be kept united, harmoniously reconciled as they are in the master pages, in the dialogue of the Sphinx and the Chimera where so much precision ends by suggesting so much mystery. This same characteristic, the expansion into limitless dream of a complete description which, from any other pen, would be tedious, distinguishes *Hérodias* among the *Trois Contes* (1877). The Symbolists of literature and of painting have been as much haunted by the image of his Salome as Zola and the Naturalists by the finished descriptions of *Madame Bovary* and *L'Education.*

Writers of the most opposite tendencies have an equal right to call themselves painters of the "real" if it be recognized that the real has several faces. Describing the real meant, for Stendhal, representing souls struggling against events; for Flaubert it was rather the representation of events acting upon souls; and each soon espoused, openly or secretly, the point of view which he had adopted, perhaps primarily through a desire for impartiality. Stendhal sides with Julien Sorel and with Comte Mosca who calculate their acts. Flaubert—at least artistically—sides with the life which renders Emma Bovary and Frédéric Moreau commonplace. If his portrait of a century he detested remains so admirable, it is largely because of that hatred which has given a unity to the thousand touches juxtaposed by his brush. Flaubert's masterpieces are miracles of equilibrium between the "two men." *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (1881), incomplete moreover, is so disappointing only because it unites the two defects—the truculence of the romantic and the heaviness of the realist—in treating a subject where lyricism and documentation are equally monotonous. Long before Zola and the naturalistic experiment, Flaubert's example had proved that realism, to be really great, must follow it's natural bent and culminate in the epic.

Scientific theories fertilize literature only when they touch writers with a radiance of greatness and of beauty. In the general orienta-

tion of minds towards a desire for scientific precision, it has been possible to indicate the influence of Auguste Comte,[1] of Darwin, whose *Origin of Species* was translated in 1862, of Claude Bernard who published in 1865 his *Introduction à l'étude de la Médecine expérimentale;* but in this reconciliation of science and literature two men have played a preponderant part because they were, at the same time, great scientists and great writers. Renan and Taine were the masters of thinking for the generation 1870–90. It is enough to read the *Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse* in a sympathetic spirit to feel anew the charm with which Renan then held his readers spell-bound. There was an irresistible fascination in the spectacle he offered them. The erudite author of that monument, *Les Origines du Christianisme,* the savant who seemed to have robbed Tübingen of the first place in biblical studies, poured out his heart in dramas, dialogues and philosophical reveries where ideas clashed in tournaments rather than in real combats; and the clever producer of this phantasmagoria, equivocally conjured up from the confines of science and of myth, did not conceal his amusement at the disarray into which such a game plunged many a spectator of this intimate theatre where the delicate lighting distorted the contours of virtues and of vices into disconcerting mixtures. Had not this Breton written: "The great depth of our art is being able to turn our malady into a charm"? Chateaubriand had not more fully justified this affirmation. Recognized representative of the objective method, of the scientific spirit, of the "impersonal concretion," Renan won the attention of a generation by parading before them, with ironical candour, the fits of temper and the freaks of a mocking old man.

No one was more conscious of this paradox than he. In the intimacy of his own soul, he probably excused himself on the score of the number and the value of the ideas which the taste for his person caused to penetrate his disciples. He believed sufficiently in indirect means to congratulate himself upon it and to conclude that, from this point of view also, his passage through the century would not have been in vain. Admitting the necessity of finishing the Renanian work with an unforgettable portrait of M. Renan, he devoted a good part of his last years to this portrait. Literary history has to make but very few retouches in order to adopt it—neither addition nor suppression, nothing but an imperceptibly different distribution of light and shade; and, to

[1] In a history of contemporary literature, we can retain nothing of Auguste Comte but his doctrinal influence which was exerted upon Taine and Littré. The extent of his practical influence is known and can be found in the Brazilian, Turkish, Portuguese and even Chinese revolutions. His importance in contemporary thought will be recalled in connection with Bourget and Maurras (Chap. VII).

begin with, it stresses, as one of his significant traits, a certain want of unconstraint which he himself veils under a cover of politeness or of modesty but which we, however, call by its real name, dryness. He is completely at ease only before a public—a public of well-bred people who never interrupt the lecturer. Contact with the real crowd, in 1870, but served to increase his comfortable pessimism. For if, at the bottom of his heart, he had remained a Romantic, he hated and despised formal Romanticism. He had not the slightest taste for the excessive, save that which can be described in a distant *Antechrist*. If his faults are, as he has himself noted, a priest's, he was able on two great occasions to suffer for his convictions; but with age his prudence affects an ecclesiastical unction. His liberalism would offer no obstacle to the advent of an intelligent tyrant or of a tyrannical oligarchy presided over by the *directeur* of the *Institut*. Writers have reproached him with reducing certain grandeurs by assertions immediately diminished through comparison with others soon called into question in their turn, thus arriving at a sort of artistic scepticism, at an "after all . . . " more admissible in an inhabitant of Sirius than in a human being. The savants complained that even the science which he had made his ideal was not spared the same justified scratches with which he disqualified Auguste Comte who did not write French or Flaubert who was ignorant of abstract nátures. He serves it, but he feels how charming it would be to betray it. This master of objective criticism will occasionally insinuate the advice to "solicit facts." His devotion to truth serves at times as a mask for the least impersonal, the most frankly artistic pride.

If man is above all changeful, no one offers a juster idealized image of humanity than he, on the condition that account be taken of the idealization accomplished by himself on his own portrait. In his liberal faith he finds the two secular instincts of departure towards a new hope and of repose in present progress contending with his reveries to the sound of the bells of Is. He accuses his century of not being sufficiently serious for the stark truth. This justifies his ironic quips. At the end of a life devoted to a monument of thought, he is afraid of having been too narrowly right. He wonders—or pretends to wonder—whether he has not gone astray, whether the abode of wisdom is not, all things considered, among the frivolous. He claims his right to smile.

He has however, in advance, very liberally accorded his reader the right to read him *cum grano salis*. Not to understand this would be the clumsiest blunder. At bottom, no weakness diminishes his force. If it amuses him to falter, it is, as he has said, because his "morality is

proof against everything." It is easy to treat him as a "disaffected cathedral," to recall his own words: "My life is still governed by a faith I no longer have." He no longer has it: let us understand that he has modified its form and its object: "I have left the spiritual to enter the ideal," that is to say, to occupy a stronger position in the service of the same cause. He no longer believes in Catholicism. He believes more firmly than ever in beauty and in science. When publishing, in 1890, *L'Avenir de la Science*, written in 1848, he stated that these assertions remained flesh of his flesh. If the lover of rational beauty and the mystic Celt clash in the *Prière sur L'Acropole*, it is that a harmony may be born of this conflict. From the depths of a voluptuousness there springs for him not bitterness but the promise of a more exquisite enjoyment. For he possesses, like Athene, in a chosen place, his inexpugnable citadel: "I have always believed in human intelligence." There is his veritable faith. He proved it by sacrificing the other faith to it. When he staked his present and future life upon the contradictions between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, he took the side of human intelligence against all its detractors. He never recanted on this point. If he owes the brilliance of his renown to his moving charm, he owes its duration to his indestructible conviction.

The contrast between Renan and Taine was, from the first, one of the commonplaces of criticism. Very far from denying it, it would be proper rather to emphasize it. It is customary to stress, in their works, the opposition between Renan's capricious hesitations and the firm progress of Taine. It would be less trite, but certainly quite as true, to insist upon the more intimate differences between the complacent satisfactions in which Renan stops short somewhat quickly and the unrest of Taine torn between criticism and creation.

Taine's influence upon the youth of 1870–1880 was immense. The works of Barrès and of Bourget bear eloquent witness to it. It was possible to consider crowning with roses a Renan just a trifle intoxicated with his own scepticism. Taine's dignity excluded all familiarity of this description. He was the philosopher. Let us compare, in *Les Déracinés*, the homage rendered to him and that with which Hugo is honoured, and we shall appreciate the difference between the influence exercised by a thinker and the worship offered a half-legendary hero.

In 1870 had appeared the two volumes *De l'Intelligence* in which Taine expounded, with his philosophical ideas, his method of work. "Very small facts," said he, "well chosen, important, significant, amply circumstantiated and minutely noted—there, to-day, is the matter

of all science." In agreement with Renan he fixed, as his century's task, the establishment of a series of detailed, precise monographs, indispensable bases for every attempt at generalization; but he saw and declared the danger of taking this mole-like work as the end of science. He proclaimed that collective views were necessary, even when venturesome, and that the rest was of value only to permit the attaining of this "high belvedere."

As art critic and literary critic he had applied this method, persuaded that the natural history of minds is a science as fertile as zoology, also obedient to laws which it is not impossible to discover. The daily contact with English literature of which he had made himself the historian had freed his mind from several classical and oratorical prejudices, had accustomed him to find the lyrical note elsewhere than in rhetoric, to conceive other measures of genius than refined good taste midway between the extremes; and he had remained widely comprehensive enough sometimes to forget his own point of departure and the theories he desired to verify, in order to devote his whole effort to faithfully depicting the human animal he met on his road.

The War of 1870, the Commune and the triumph of democracy overwhelmed him. The new order seemed so uncertain! It occurred to him he would arrive at a clearer vision himself and bring a light to his contemporaries by soliciting lessons of the past. He became a historian in order to acquire a political opinion and undertook to unravel the origins of contemporary France. *L'Ancien Régime* and *La Révolution* count among the most admirable frescoes in our literature. Their documentation is enormous. It has furnished an arsenal of arguments to anti-revolutionaries. A reaction has occurred since then and, without incriminating Taine's honesty, his evidence and his conclusions have been disputed. These specialists' quarrels apart, *Les Origines* have the greatness of an epic with a hundred visages. Carlyle and Michelet alone can be compared to him for intensity and life; but they are very inferior to him in the underpinning of the work, in the application and the method. If Taine grounds his edifice upon a mass of little facts, at every step he transcends this domain, He protested with disdainful pride against the bias of which he has been accused. He merely claimed for the historian the privileges of the naturalist. He aimed at being towards his subject "as before the metamorphosis of an insect." He wished passionately to understand. To get at the truth of events he welcomed the most contradictory witnesses of a troubled epoch. To attain that superior truth which is the explanation of events, he solicited the aid of all those who have studied and revealed the laws of the human heart. If, in his notes, the

reader meets side by side a quotation from the archives and an appeal to the experience of Balzac, Flaubert or Browning, it is because, in unforgettably differentiating Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau, he brings his contribution to psychology. Science aims at the general: in Danton should be seen the Barbarian, in Napoleon the Artist; whereafter the last stage must be passed in order to discover the true heroes of this tragedy which has lacked no purple, of this intellectual epic: here is the Classic, here is the Ideologist, here is the Jacobin, here is the Man. . . .

To complain of this would be to mutilate and misunderstand Taine. It would seem paradoxical, having praised Renan's strength, to speak of Taine's weakness. There is, however, at the bottom of his intellectual life, a drama. In the personal notes of 1862 he assigned himself this goal: "To paint man like an artist and, at the same time, to reconstruct him like a dialectician." His unfinished *Etienne Mayran* proves he had renounced the rôle of creator, with a perhaps exaggerated modesty, not without a melancholy regret. All his life he harboured the sadness of having been but "a carver, an analyst." [1] He believed he owed this sacrifice to concern for his moral hygiene: "One must not destroy oneself," he declared. This resignation gives an undertone of vague pathos to the vigorous beauty of his most finished pages. It was, perhaps, from an animator voluntarily reduced to silence, that was fashioned the talent of this great reconstructor.

Leconte de Lisle and Baudelaire in poetry. Stendhal and Flaubert in the novel. Taine and Renan for philosophy. Such will be the dominant influences after 1870, all differing through their beliefs and their scepticisms, all united in a single reaction against Romanticism, in a single appeal to objective reality.

[1] See his letter to Maupassant, March 2, 1882.

CHAPTER II

LE PARNASSE

BETWEEN 1866 and 1876 appeared, with Lemerre's imprint, the three series of *Le Parnasse contemporain.* These anthologies contained poems by Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Hérédia, Coppée, Dierx, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Mendès, Glatigny, Jean Lahor, Armand Silvestre. There was no bond among these poets other than their respect for their leader and what Mendès calls "hatred of poetic disorderliness." As was natural in such a haphazard group, divergences soon manifested themselves. Already perceptible during the period of imitation, these progressively became more marked as each asserted his originality. Baudelaire's heirs—Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Verlaine and Mallarmé—followed the natural bent of their genius and became, for different reasons, the masters of Symbolism. The epithet of Parnassians—as accidental as, for another artistic group, that of Impressionists—was to remain attached to such of these writers as, without a common literary program, continued, in their different ways, faithful to the influence of Gautier, Banville, Leconte de Lisle, united in the same obedience to a beauty of formal and unfaltering precision. Due allowance being made for a generalization, summary perhaps but not absolutely unjust, this worship of form and objectivity may be taken as the characteristic trait of *Le Parnasse.*

1. THE MASTERS OF *LE PARNASSE*

In this accepted sense of the word no one was more Parnassian than José-Maria de Hérédia. A Cuban brought up in France, his origin may be held responsible for his love of unrelieved magnificence. "Beloved pupil" of Leconte de Lisle, heir to his literary ideal but not to his pessimism, he carried the art of evocation to its extreme limits. His ambition was to write, in his turn, a *Légende des Siècles* each episode of which should be enclosed within the rigorous lines of a sonnet. The collection of these highly wrought poems, *Les Trophées,* is a unique success, admirable and without sequel. The imitation of the master is sometimes too evident. It is not by such *pastiches* as *La Mort de l'aigle* that Hérédia's fame will survive. Neither is it

by that affectation of local colour in which he goes beyond Leconte de Lisle who himself corrected Hugo. The surest effect of *Romancero* is probably to lead us back with pleasure to the idealized Spain of Corneille. Hérédia's originality must be sought elsewhere and, first of all, in a certain fluid purity by virtue of which he takes his place in a chain of really French poets. *Le Naufrage*, *Vendange*, or *Sur un marbre brisé* recall André Chénier's supple ease and have served as models for the best poems of Henri de Régnier.

In the painting of landscapes he does not appear uniformly successful. The methods which permitted him to render with so precise an intensity the splendidly overwhelming impressions of the tropics are less adapted to the grey, indeterminate reveries evoked by the soil of Brittany; but Hérédia again takes the lead when it comes to fixing in a sonnet an epoch or, better still, the most heroic figure of an epoch seen at the summit of his destiny. Whether it be Hannibal or Antony, or the Conqueror-type, or again one of those Samurais or those Daimios representative of a whole civilization, wherever the picturesque description of an impersonal being suffices to suggest an ensemble of ideas and of sentiments, Hérédia is without rival.

Thus his masterpieces are, unquestionably, those of his sonnets where he paints an art object confining, within its strict contours, the representation of a world. When he describes an antique vase, a mediæval window, a wrought blade, a Sicilian or Renaissance medal, a gilded vellum binding, a finished enamel, Hérédia's verses share in their perennity. He excels in epigraphs, in epigrams and in summaries of a whole work in fourteen lines, as seen in the sonnets inspired by Ronsard and Du Bellay; but his sovereign mastery consists in transforming the mobile into immobility, in fixing it in an attitude which he then paints minutely. It is not surprising that his look transforms the sky into an escutcheon. This fertile impoverishment of the real is the very condition of his art.

The single book which Hérédia devoted to the depiction of the entire world forms the most perfect contrast with the abundant work of François Coppée, who can be summed up in a single sentence: he was born, lived and died a *vieux Parisien*. His unique originality arises from the exactness with which his poetry reflects the emotions of a bourgeois idler of the capital. He himself was not fully conscious of this at first and the influence of celebrated predecessors turned him from his natural path. In his initial collection, *Le Reliquaire*, he imitates Hugo (beginning of *Le Justicier*) and he struggles to reproduce that poet's antithetical methods. He imitates Leconte de Lisle. That

is to say, he raises himself to rhyme *Astracan* with *caimacan*. He even imitates Baudelaire (*Solitude*, *La Bouquetière*), quite as conventionally moreover, and his oppositions of purity and Satanism (*Rédemption*) provoke smiles. Here already, however, he announces what François Coppée's poetry will be: easy emotion excited by a commonplace subject (*Adagio*), rather flat imagery (*L'Etape*), amorous commonplaces treated without taste (*La Trêve*). *Ritournelle* and *Une Sainte* already revealed all of Coppée: prosaic in Parnassian verse, sentimental like a kind of poetic Chaminade, personally silly, supportable only in little Flemish genre pictures, like this:

> *Car tu n'as pour amant qu'un bourgeois de Harlem,*
> *Et, dans la serre chaude, ainsi qu'en un harem,*
> *S'exhalent sans parfum tes ennuis de sultane.*
>
> (*A une tulipe.*)

Face to face with his first work, Coppée discovered himself. He was somewhat alarmed and wished, before continuing, to say farewell to poetry. In *Les Intimités*, amid reminiscences of Joseph Delorme and of the intimate Baudelaire:

> *O les premiers baisers à travers la violette! . . .*
> *Le logis était plein d'une odeur de baise*

are found a few personal and penetrating verses:

> *Quelque chose comme une odeur qui serait blonde . . .*
> *Le crépuscule est triste et doux comme un adieu*

and the touching regrets of the Parisian of Paris for whom the world ends at the suburbs. "At bottom I have remained naïve," he adds rather comically. One is not sure whether it is an excuse or an aggravating circumstance.

The same year (1869) saw the publication of two works by Coppée. His *Passant* met with an immense success on the stage of the Odéon. This story of a great love which starts, evolves and sacrifices itself in twenty minutes in an imaginary Italy contained the exact dose of moral sentimentality desirable in a subsidized theatre. It indicated a vein which Coppée was never to cease exploiting in small plays of which *Le Luthier de Crémone* is the type. His real talent, however, came to light in *Poèmes modernes* among which must be instanced *L'Angélus*, the story of an old *curé* and of an old soldier who adopt a child and let it die for want of a mother; *Le Banc*, a "Parisian idyll" between a nursemaid and a soldier; *Le Père*, in which a drunkard no

longer dares beat his wife for fear of waking their child, and finally that abominable melodrama entitled *La Grève des Fourgerons*. Coppée had thus accomplished the miracle of beguiling the ordinary public of newspaper novels into reading rhymed works. Without apparent effort this former pupil of the haughty Leconte de Lisle had reached the limits of platitude.

He made it a point of honour to maintain them and published *Les Humbles* the title of which involved an adroit equivocation. Let no one be misled indeed: Coppée is not, in the noble sense of the word, a popular poet. The poet who really loves the people is the one who, knowing their sufferings and their misery, bends down to console and to guide them, like a brother, towards a higher ideal—that of which art is but an apostolate. There is nothing of the sort in Coppée. *Les Humbles* offers a hundred examples of false literature, no trace of profound sympathy. He takes no interest in the pitiful human stupidity of the exiled nurse or of the "Breton volunteer" save as pretexts for chromos of a hateful sentimental silliness. Thus he has deserved that the little Montrouge grocer who, caught between his wife and his mother, who

. . . Partage le lit d'une femme insensible
Et tous les deux ils ont froid au cœur, froid aux pieds

should remain his most celebrated hero and, by a just revenge, his most assiduous reader.

Even in the most successful of these descriptions, in the sketches of the Paris streets, Coppée does not deserve the praise of Zola who congratulates him on having raised "the flag of Naturalism in poetry." Zola's tenderness for works in which he found "an echo of the contemporary novel" is explicable; but we may be sure that the scenes of *Promenades et Intérieurs* would have been judged by him without the slightest indulgence had they not in his eyes had the merit of marking a poetic revolution. For, in the numberless prose tales left by him Coppée has treated the same subjects and their banality is obvious. Conventional lower-class, sensitive upper-class, sentimentally repentant rogues, masters and men melodramatically reconciled in a torch-light patriotism behind a military band—it is hard to say whether all this is flatter or more dishonest. At best, such stories as *Une Idylle pendant le siège* possess the testimonial value, as to the war and the Commune, of a little Parisian bourgeois who brings to great events the shameless display of his incomprehension; and the travel notes, particularly those on Brittany, complete the demonstration of this sterility.

After the success of *Les Humbles*, Coppée survived himself in the

theatre as well as in various volumes of verse where some rather pretty amorous triflings (*Le Menuet*) redeem neither the various improvisations on current events which he believed it his duty to publish, nor the *récits épiques* in which he gleaned the crumbs of Hugo and Leconte de Lisle, nor the standardized false love poems, mechanically constructed on verbal effects—for example, in *L'Exilée*, *L'Echo*, *Le Lied*, and *Trois Oiseaux*—nor those countless rough-cast idylls which last the length of a cigarette and in which he indefatigably dilutes Baudelaire's divine sonnet, *A une passante*, nor that ambitious *Olivier* which might be attributed to a belated, passionless Musset. Never has so much pettiness been piled up more painfully and this Parnassian's supreme title to glory may perhaps, in the last analysis, be his having sometimes held in check the poetical fame of M. Paul Déroulède.

Still more abundant than François Coppée's is the poetical work of Catulle Mendès, one of the instigators of *Le Parnasse*, the epigone of Gautier and of Banville from whom he inherited an extraordinary formal flexibility. This virtuosity Mendès, for half a century, put at the service of the most incredible absence of profound thought. Imitation with him is natural, almost unconscious. He paints, one after the other, with the same superficial conviction, the Greece of *Penteleïa*, the Spain of the *Sérénades*, the India of *Pagode*. He assimilates with equal ease Baudelaire's false Satanism (*Le Bénitier*), Hugo's theatrical effects (*Contes épiques*), Banville's acrobatic feats (*Canidie*). His long poems, the Swedenborgian *Hesperus* or the *Soleil de Minuit*, are further instances of his formidable facility for turning anything whatsoever into rhyme.

His originality lies in the popularization of a certain artificial second-rate libertine, where the literature detracts from the frank sensuality. The best pieces of this sort (particularly *Philomela*, *Intermède* and *Rondels*) recall eighteenth-century prints. Those which may pass as impromptus keep a certain lightly amorous charm.

Although a dozen years separated their literary débuts, it is nevertheless fitting to bracket with the improviser Mendès, that essential improviser Jean Richepin. An extreme facility for imitation, a remarkable verbal truculency, a very precise sense of the sort of bullying the public will stand—these qualities already revealed themselves in the two volumes, *Chanson des Gueux* and *Caresses*, which made Richepin's success—a *succès de scandale* and of virtuosity also, but rendered legitimate by a sincere youthful revolt against shackles and conventions.

Jules Lemaître has noted that there are two men in Richepin. First there is a Touranian rebel with sympathy for all outlaws—with Villon, with tramps, with mountebanks, with the ocean in which he fancies he finds various images of unbridled liberty. If he has sometimes inspired Richepin with the grotesque pages of *Les Blasphèmes*, where the author indulges in bravado to incite the gods to combat, it is nevertheless this Touranian who has inspired him with his best, freest, most original poems; but the "very great rhetorician" whom Lemaître already proclaimed in him quickly got the upper hand and the poet of *La Mer*, the novelist of *Miarka*, trusting to his prodigious facility, has undertaken to constitute himself the accredited purveyor of a rich and numerous public with arrogant literary pretensions and mediocre poetical needs. It is to be regretted that Richepin has so soon and so completely succeeded in satisfying it.

Under different aspects, the example of Coppée, Mendès and Richepin shows one of the perils to which the Parnassians were exposed: the mechanical employment of formal qualities for the standardized manufacture of imitations of their own works. It was by subduing their inspiration to the laws of a noble and lofty thought that the two true Parnassian poets, Léon Dierx and Sully Prudhomme, escaped from this vulgarization of themselves.

When, after the death of Verlaine, numerous votes designated Léon Dierx as prince of French poets, his work was still little known to the crowd. Native of the Ile Bourbon (of which *Les Filaos* and other poems recall the memory), friend of Leconte de Lisle to whom *Poèmes et Poésies* was dedicated, Léon Dierx, from his first publication, captured the taste of an élite. Doubtless the *Vision d'Eve* could still be reproached with very direct memories of the master. The tragic note of *La Prophétie* or of *Henrick le Veuf* was not without a melodramatic touch and there was something conventional in the exoticism of *Souré-Ha;* but the pessimism of *La Prison* or *Le Vieux Solitaire*, the proud despair of *In Extremis* announced a successor, a continuer of Vigny and of Leconte de Lisle, while already appeared Dierx's personal charm—an alternation of gentle, limpid melodies (see *Après le Bain*) and of grave meditations where, in the soft light, the visionary watches symbolical beings who pass bearing all the unjust sorrows from which humanity suffers.

This originality was still more strongly marked in *Lèvres closes*, a fine title nobly justified. This volume is the most complete and the most significant of his works. It opens with a *Prologue* in which the

poet reports what a paradoxical effort he made to achieve impassibility.

J'ai détourné mes yeux de l'homme et de la vie.

All the unrest of the world has lived again in him. It has filled his soul but it has not submerged it. Far from seeking to establish a barren compromise between love and pride, Dierx has expressed the power of two contrary aspirations. *L'Odeur sacrée*, *La Nuit de juin* tell magnificently what contagion of love emanates from nature to trouble the heart. Sometimes even, in rare moments of relaxation (*Les Rhymes*), he sings the ecstasy of a beauty free from bitterness; but his favourite season is the autumn; his chosen spot is a great wood turning yellow; his beloved hour, twilight. Then only he tastes the joy of the melancholy harmony which inspired the *Soir d'octobre*, a masterpiece of calm meditation.

To *Les Lèvres closes* were added later *Paroles d'un vaincu* and *Amants* which define and complete Léon Dierx's teaching. The two volumes which comprise his whole work contain some of the poetic meditations, tender and virile, eloquent and intimate, which do most honour to contemporary thought and art.

From Sully Prudhomme's first collection, *Stances et Poèms*, the public immediately adopted one piece, *Le Vase brisé*, which quickly became popular. While these charmingly playful, delicately sentimental stanzas were being recited in drawing-rooms, the author was preparing a translation of Lucretius the first volume of which he published with a preface revealing his veritable preoccupations. After discussing the graver questions of psychology and of scientific method, after questioning both outward and inward experience, he concludes: "The spiritualists are certainly justified in maintaining that moral phenomena do not spring from physical phenomena, though subservient to them; but the materialists are right in affirming that nothing authorizes a substantial distinction between the moral and the physical. . . . For our part, we are inclined to think that these two orders of phenomena are irreducible, one to the other, inasmuch as they depend upon two distinct moods of the universal being." We need then, he adds, "a theory of curiosity. We must incessantly multiply the results of the two experiences by analysing them more and more." In so doing, we come to "understand ourselves." In this fashion, philosophy, "instead of beginning over again in each mind, in every generation, will be able to hand on accepted results and to continue from century to century, which will be the certain sign of its scientific organization."

Thus love of poetry, belief in the value of poetical expression, reconciled two poets in Sully Prudhomme: the delicate successor of the confidential Musset, whose first appearance had been greeted by public opinion, and the philosophical, scientific mind, ambitious to "give some undisputed foundation to philosophy," to become the French Lucretius; and no doubt he esteemed the successes of the first only as they rendered ears attentive to the truths which were to be announced by the second.

For Sully Prudhomme is not alternately a poet and a philosopher. He is always a poet-philosopher. So that his work, so little autobiographical outwardly, retraces the history of his mind where the intelligence, daily more strengthened in its ideal of severe beauty, gradually dominates his sensibility, reducing its function to adorning with a new garment the truth bared by the patient seeker. In the first volume, on the contrary, he abandoned himself to the simple pleasure of feeling, which inspired him with rapid modern elegies such as *La Prière*, or with pretty, delicate notations:

Un voyage! telle est la vie
Pour ceux qui n'osent que rêver . . .

Already, however, he expressed his high conception of the poet's rôle:

Car si l'humanité tolère encor nos chants,
C'est que notre élégie est son propre poème;

and this sense of duty, this perpetual recollection that *noblesse oblige*, explains the weakest poems—the too obvious glorification of maternal love, moral apostrophes to *La Vertu*, the rather facile symbolism of *L'Etranger*. He still sang *Vaines tendresses;* but already he had taken up his position and, among the sonnets of *Les Epreuves*, one reads a complete portrait of Spinoza in fourteen lines—a *tour de force* perhaps more to the honour of the critic than to that of the poet.

The most discreetly revealing evidence of this double inspiration was offered us by Sully Prudhomme when, in *Le Prisme*, he brought together poems composed at different periods. When the occasional verses have been eliminated from it, each reader is free to prefer, according to his own taste, the charming society madrigals, like *L'Eventail*, or the tenderly delicate reveries (*Le Soir*), or the hymns to philosophical effort (*Les Chercheurs*). Before *Le Prisme*, Sully Prudhomme had published *Justice*, not without a certain apprehension. In the preface he declares that the events of 1870–71 have disturbed him and inclined him to pessimism; and then "a corner of azure and some white summits reappeared . . . it was impossible not to hope

still." *Justice* is the story of a seeker who forced his heart to remain silent and wished to chart his course with his reason alone. In vain he seeks justice between species and between states, in the species and in the state. He finds it nowhere; but a voice in him forbids despair. He discovers that this voice is the heart's and decides to listen to it. In his conscience he finds, steadfast, the idea of justice bound up with the most intimate essence of humanity, the progress of which, slow but sure, is shown by the history of the city. This idea imposes itself upon the world as the true dignity proper to man, through the sympathy which unites beings progressively with the development of understanding and science; and he is justified in defining it as "the ideal goal of science closely united with love."

It is idle to deny that such a poem is difficult of access. Sully Prudhomme knew it, but he believed that in addition to all sentiments, "nearly all ideas can be confided to verse."

Sully Prudhomme was too loyal to force his convictions and to affirm poetically a faith which his philosophical thought had not discovered. After *Justice*, however, it seemed to him he could, without forfeiting his sincerity, openly express his hope in human destiny. Such is the subject of *Bonheur*. Faustus, after his death, awakes in another life where his earthly friend, Stella, greets him, inviting him to a delicious celestial banquet where she shows him the procession of the world's wise men and of the artists who have become blessed in pure beauty. The two lovers unite in a sublime, harmonious marriage; but this intoxication has not lulled thought in Faustus. Unsatisfied, he aspires to know the secret of Being. He questions antique, then modern philosophy, then the sciences, finally Pascal who drowns doubt in faith. Disappointed, he returns to Stella. However, the earth's voices, which have not ceased to accompany his anxious quest, reach him, like a goad. Stella refuses to abandon him. They decide to make the sacrifice and return to earth. The earth is empty. Death has killed man. Faustus and Stella offer to remake a humanity—to begin again the pathetic story. The divine will intervenes. An angel bears them away and brings them in triumph to the true paradise, to the world's source.

The same reasons which have discouraged many a reader of *La Justice* repelled them from *Le Bonheur* also; and it is fitting here moreover to make allowance for the somewhat arid dogmatic presentation as well as for the astral novel in the manner of Flammarion. Sully Prudhomme has not always avoided the two stumbling-blocks inherent in his subject. There is, however, in *Le Bonheur*, over and above the qualities of philosophical precision noted in *La Justice*, a more

vibrating inspiration than in the preceding poem. The thought more readily leaves the abstract zone to incarnate itself in living portraits of philosophers. It lets itself swerve in fine appeals of human tenderness and chaste love. Up to the moment of the sacrifice, the earth voices support the journey of Faustus and Stella with their vibrant canticles. *Le Bonheur* contains the pages in which Sully Prudhomme has best realized his ambition for a meditative fraternal poetry.

2. FOOTHILLS OF *LE PARNASSE*

A review of the poetry of the Parnassian epoch would be incomplete did it not accord a place to a certain number of poets more or less directly attached to *Le Parnasse.*

Mme. Ackermann made her début with a volume of *Contes* in which she affected a very disagreeably conceited tone and transformed legendary narrative into mediocre imitative *gauloiseries.* Nothing in them made it possible to foresee future *Poésies philosophiques,* full of bitter revolt, where vigour and despairing eloquence often evoke the memory of the glorious Leopardi.

Companion of the first Parnassians, dying too young to succeed in freeing himself from the imitation of Banville, Albert Glatigny has left a legend rather than a body of work. We should doubtless deplore that the same good fortune did not befall Armand Silvestre whose first poems permitted some illusions soon dissipated by a hundred thick volumes of *contes grassouillets, histoires inconvenantes, contes au gros sel,* monotonously distressing.

Under the pseudonym of Jean Lahor, Henry Cazalis, nurtured on science and Oriental thought, has, in majestic verse, celebrated the universal Illusion and the glory of Annihilation. Unlike this disdainful poet, Léon Cladel, author of *Va-Nu-Pieds,* sang of beggars with an exuberance which the Baudelairean discipline had not always tempered.

Among the survivors of the preceding epoch—those "*plastiques*" who had formed the link between the Romantics and the Parnassians—may be retained Joséphine Soulary, master-sonneteer to whom the anthologies have remained hospitable.

Jean Aicard is the author of numerous poems, shadowless as the Provençal sky, in the clarity of which certain critics have seen the tradition of the Greek epigram while others have found but a dull facility. His *Père Lebonnard* (a play in verse which would have made Eugène Manuel jealous) and his *Jésus* are favourites with families for their excellent lessons of theoretical and practical morality.

André Theuriet is principally known for his prose stories. His verses have the same scent of woodland nature and of intimacy with

rustic life. Certain of Paul Arène's plays have also survived—cicada songs which keep a little of the Parisian ease and of the Provençal suppleness, the mixture making the charm of *Les Contes.*

Maurice Bouchor has, with a fine personal abnegation, devoted himself to a noble task of popular education. He has undertaken to reveal the great works of the Middle Ages and of Shakespeare to the masses by means of ingenious adaptations. He has never separated thought from immediate action. His friend, Gabriel Vicaire, the poet of La Bresse, has sought his inspiration in our folklore and renewed the art of the old *fableurs* with an agreeable good humour, and even parodic gifts which found their proper employment in *Les Déliquescences d'Adoré Floupette.*

Maurice Rollinat's exasperated Baudelairianism marks one of the limits of *Le Parnasse.* All that is artificial in literary Satanism is disclosed in *Les Névroses;* but this furious pessimism, monotonous and puerile, is as sure an indication of poetic decadence as, at the other end of the keyboard, are Emile Bergerat's clownings where Banville's music dies in a fit of hiccups.

We cannot end this review without a few words concerning the poetic drama which, during the period in question, reached neither the grandeur of classical tragedy nor the brilliance of Romantic drama. One notes successively timely successes like Henri de Bornier's *La Fille de Roland,* pseudo-historical dramas like Coppées *Les Jacobites* and *Pour La Couronne,* fantasies of a flamboyant Romanticism like Banville's *Gringoire* and *Le Baiser.* In every style, from antique drama to operatic libretto, Mendès displayed his skill of improvisation and *La Reine Fiammette* is probably the most representative of his works. Jean Richepin served the public taste in plays the most celebrated of which were *Le Flibustier* and *Le Chemineau,* exercises of a clever rhetoric which deftly blends the appearance of rebellion with obedience to prejudices. We shall see later how, to their great surprise, Edmond Rostand became the inheritor of the Parnassians.

CHAPTER III

REALISM

1. REALISM AND NATURALISM

THE Parnassian movement did not and could not mark a complete rupture with Romanticism. It only avoided certain not always displeasing exuberances. Whatever may have been the exaggeration of the Romantic writers, it must be recognized they renewed poetic sensibility so profoundly that no later poet has been able to free himself completely, and throughout his whole work, from their influence. In prose alone the anti-Romantic reaction was able to attain its full development. Nothing was better suited to this purpose than that sovereignly plastic form, the novel.

Balzac's novels had been realistic in one sense only. He had piled up in them all the details supplied by his observation. He had at times been very scrupulous in his reliance upon documents. On the other hand, this visionary had delighted in "idealizing inversely, in their ugliness or their stupidity," the magnified heroes of exceptional dramas. Flaubert himself had not been a whole-souled realist. In *Salammbô* the balance was sometimes destroyed in favour of lyricism. In his handling of contemporary subjects, there manifested itself a rebellious bitterness which occasionally transformed the novel into a tract. The Naturalists claim to replace this duality of observation and of imagination with a unity: the picture of "true life." The capital affirmation of the new school is thus formulated by the Goncourts: "The novel of to-day is made with documents narrated or copied from nature, just as history is made with written documents. Historians are narrators of the past, novelists narrators of the present" (*Journal*, Oct. 24, 1864).

2. THE NATURALISTIC NOVEL: THE GONCOURTS

Consistent with their principles, the Goncourts are at once historians and novelists; but in their historical works, as well as in their novels and even in their life, they were above all writers in the most noble meaning of the word, perfect "men of letters."

If grammatical laws permitted it, one would have to speak of the

Goncourts in the singular, so completely is the duality of their personalities blended in the unity of the writer. Although Jules, the younger, died in 1870—died as a soldier of literature—and his brother, Edmond, survived him twenty-six years, they remain inseparable, all their chief works having been finished or conceived in this fraternal union. The elder has given (*Journal*, Dec. 27, 1895) some details concerning their collaboration. Jules was "a gay, spirited, expansive nature, a more trained stylist, enamoured of style." Edmond was "a melancholy, thoughtful, concentrated nature, having, above all, worked at the architecture of the books. My brother," he adds, "had more especially taken charge of the style, and I of the creation of the work"; but that was the starting point. Their aim was the quest "of a single style, very personal, very Goncourt." Nobody would deny their having fashioned that original instrument, *l'écriture artiste*, as it has been called.

To translate what they saw, felt or thought into a new form was not only the aim of their art, it was the very aim of their life. Doubtless, from a certain angle, this ambition will always give rise to smiles, and the legend of Jules de Goncourt, the martyr, has provoked shrugs. It is recalled that the *Journal* was to appear only twenty years after the death of the surviving brother, and the fact is stressed that "the Widow," unable to resist the desire to read that intimate record in print, delivered to the public all he dared reveal of it in his lifetime. However, such arguments fall when it has been understood that this *Journal* was the very life of a Goncourt—not at all the confidential note-book in which he related for himself the gossip of contemporaries, his own impressions, his pointed prophecies, his revolts, his judgments, but a real book in which he tried to create a new form, to photograph reality with the maximum of precision possible. We are informed that these souvenirs are really literature in the preface where Edmond de Goncourt demands the reader's indulgence for the first years "when we were still rather unskilled in the direct notation of facts." The problem is thus frankly stated. There is no question of impartiality: "We make no secret of our having been impassioned creatures, nervous, unhealthily impressionable and consequently sometimes unjust." What is essential is perhaps less the thing seen than the way in which it is rendered: "We have always preferred the phrase and expression which least blunted and *academized* the keenness of our sensations, the pride of our ideas."

The *Journal* is the Goncourts' masterpiece. To add that it is their best novel is not an epigram if we accept their own definition: "One of the special characteristics of our novels will prove to be the fact that

they are the most historical of this epoch—novels which will furnish the greatest number of exact truths concerning the moral history of this century" (*Journal*, Jan., 1861). The *Journal* shows their entire self-absorption in their labour, the "spiritual immersion in their work," which made them forgo life, the better to steep themselves in their *Histoire de la Société pendant la Révolution* (end of Feb., 1854). It brings precious evidence as to their designs: "The novels of my brother and myself have sought, above all, to kill adventure in the novel" (Sept. 7, 1895); as to their methods also: "Put into a novel a chapter on the feminine eye and glance," they write March 26, 1855, "a chapter composed of long and serious observations." This note shows plainly to what extent realism thus understood is external, artificial and arbitrary—a realism which, in spite of so many theoretical manifestations, is in no way their true title to fame. Where they are great is through this conquest all the successive steps of which the *Journal* makes it possible to follow, through their elaboration of a feverish, nervous, fluttering style, hostile to oratorical development, the flexible measure of which breaks down traditional syntax and forecasts the impressionistic refinements. They used this instrument to serve an almost sickly subtlety and an ever-alert curiosity which authorized Edmond de Goncourt to speak of himself as of "a man seated upon forty volumes, a little in advance of all that had been done or written before him" (*Journal*, Jan. 26, 1893).

Historians, the Goncourts remained artists. In their favourite province, the French eighteenth century, they strove above all to revive picturesque figures of women (the abstract heroine of the most impersonal of these works is still called "the woman") in a setting evoked about them by literature and art—brilliant resurrections in which nevertheless we remark that indifference to music which is one of the negative characteristics of their form and of their thought. As for painting, they loved this passionately under all its aspects. *Manette Salomon* is an eloquent testimony to it, as are also their biography of Gavarni and those studies on Outamaro and Hokusaï through which Edmond de Goncourt rendered the genius of the masters of the Japanese print popular in France.

It was in the novel, however, that the Goncourts flattered themselves on having really been revolutionaries. In 1865, in the preface to *Germinie Lacerteux*, they declared: "The public loves false novels. This novel is a true one. It loves the books which pretend to go into society. This book comes from the street. Let it no longer expect the *décolleté* photography of pleasure. The study which follows is the clinic of love." These few aggressive sentences sum up so well the whole natu-

ralistic theory that the Goncourts themselves could add nothing but commentaries. One must paint real life. In fact, "now that the novel has assumed the studies and the duties of science, it can claim their liberty and frankness" (Preface to *Germinie Lacerteux*). The novelist is to be an observer working from life. *Renée Mauperin* will have a model. An aunt of the Goncourts will serve as the original for Mme. Gervaisais. The reader will find the notes of the *Journal* in the novels and Masson, in *Charles Demailly*, will repeat Théophile Gautier's sayings. War to the knife against exceptional heroes! The Goncourts, despite their aristocratic tendencies, will paint the people. "Living in the nineteenth century, in an age of universal suffrage, of democracy, of liberalism, we have asked ourselves whether what are called the lower classes had no right to the novel" (Preface, *Germinie Lacerteux*). The claim is justified; but did not the Goncourts orientate romance towards another convention? They speak of a "clinic of love," they see in the novel a contemporary moral "history." Such analogies have their danger. It is hard for the historian to avoid judgments, science conclusions, at least provisionally. The novelist begins to generalize his characters before he knows it: *Charles Demailly* was first called *Les Hommes des Lettres*. In 1875, rereading *Renée Mauperin*, Edmond de Goncourt asked himself whether its title should not have been *La Jeune Bourgeoisie*. In fact all novels present themselves as the painting of a certain *milieu*. Is it quite loyal to "warn the reader that the usual fictional plot is but secondary in this work" (Preface to *Renée Mauperin*), if the traditional plot has disappeared only to leave the field open to a somewhat specious scientific purpose? From the first profession of Naturalistic faith, it is understood why the Goncourts' novels were to be saved by their style, Zola's by visionary intensity, and why those of their imitators were to appear still-born.

What remains of the Goncourts' novels? It is difficult to pretend to make a choice where personal preferences play so insidious a part. It may nevertheless be affirmed that posterity has not retained the specifically Naturalistic novels in which Edmond de Goncourt rigorously applied his principles, any more than it has retained their attempts at realistic drama. *Charles Demailly*, the history of a man of letters driven mad by journalistic corsairs and a commonplace woman, has kept but a documentary value. The long tirades in which the preponderant influence of Jules de Goncourt is perhaps manifested stifle the action. *Sœur Philomène*, a picture of hospital life which the Goncourts studied devoutly in order to "paint on the quick," repels a little by the same monotony which weighs in *Germinie Lacerteux*, a hysterical, drunken servant. In these two books the Goncourts arrived, through

obedience to their principles, at this paradoxical triumph, an anti-Goncourtian atmosphere. *Renée Mauperin* is the most popular of their novels. This success is explained by the attraction of a dramatic plot and a touching heroine. The study of the mystic soul of *Madame Gervaisais* gave the Goncourts an opportunity to display all the subtle qualities of their style and their delicacy in psychological investigation. In spite of their rather heavy insistence upon the pathological side of the character, to the detriment of its humanity, this is one of their greatest successes.

A place by itself must, however, be given the novel in which all their diverse tendencies blend most harmoniously, *Manette Salomon.* This is, first of all, a complete and powerful evocation of the world of painters. Every character is alive in it, from Garnotelle, *Prix de Rome* and official painter, Crescent, sturdy landscape-artist, Chassagnol, sterile theorist, Anatole, fun-loving failure, to the protagonists, Coriolis, an artist of talent who lets himself be decapitated, annihilated in vapidness, by the redoubtable charm of his model, Manette Salomon, a complex Jewess who, after a period of mysterious worship of her own beauty, suddenly reveals an implacable thirst for money and for middle-class respectability. Now, on every page, the Goncourts enlarge the pattern of this poignant narrative and, in coloured phrases, bring into conflict all the artistic ideals which, for a century, have given French painting its ceaselessly renewed fertility. Here almost nothing has aged. Certain pages are, on the contrary, strikingly up to date. In *Manette Salomon,* as much as in their *Journal,* the Goncourts have made public confession. It is through the books in which they have thus gone to their own depths that they will always win those readers for whom the personality of the writer is of more importance than attachment to system.

3. ALPHONSE DAUDET

If one considered only the theories, the new views brought by a writer concerning his art, Alphonse Daudet would be simply the faithful disciple of the Goncourts. He borrowed from them their conception of the novel as a narrative laboriously prepared by "notes from life." Now, here comes into play the irony of destiny. That popularity which the Goncourts secretly desired in vain, without daring to court it by infidelity to their principles, Daudet conquered easily. The reason is that no Naturalist has left throughout his work the picture of a more affable personality, one more deeply moved by the adventures meant to move his readers.

It has repeatedly been said that Daudet was the French Dickens. It

is true he often evokes that writer's memory. *Le Petit Chose* is his *David Copperfield* and *Tartarin* his *Pickwick*, two examples which establish their points of resemblance. Having achieved success by a painful effort, both novelists kept a sympathetic taste for the humble world from which they sprang; but both sharpened, through popular contact, their qualities as humorists. Comparison of their books also renders the reader more sensible of their differences. Daudet has not the exuberance, the breadth, the talent for painting the seething crowd through which Dickens proves himself the worthy successor of Fielding. He possesses, on the other hand, a more delicate tenderness, a certain natural aristocracy, a Latin tradition which refines his humour into wit. He had begun with a volume of poems, *Les Amoureuses*, in which his sentimentality is conspicuous and which, for the analyst, is as prophetic as Maupassant's first robust, shallow verses. His initial novel, *Le Petit Chose*, was an autobiography, moving though with mischievous touches, in which must be sought not the relief of Michelet's or Vallès' memories but the ease of a sympathetic story-teller. From his difficult beginnings Daudet was always to keep a compassion for unhappy children (he returned to this theme in *Jack*), for the needy population of the Parisian *faubourgs* (*Fromont jeune et Risler aîné*), for the strays and the failures, like that Delobelle of whom he has made the very type of the *cabot*—in short, for all the characters whom the novelist can, like a big tender-hearted brother, illumine with an affectionate humour. With the *Lettres de mon moulin* Daudet inaugurated the series of books which he devoted to Provence and which are the most enduring part of his work. Descriptions of landscapes, evocations of *Fèlibres* and of Mistral, legends and ballads in prose, artless stories for little children—in all these forms Daudet showed the same supple grace. The story-teller is the more persuasive in that he himself takes so passionate an interest in his stories. Daudet loved his native province profoundly. He knew and described it in all its aspects. The themes he announced with juvenile freshness in the *Lettres* he later developed in powerful works. His *Arlésienne* (inseparable from Bizet's ardent musical atmosphere) has held its place in the theatrical repertory. It deserved to do so through its faithful depiction of a fierce southern passion in which poetry brightens dramatic anguish and in which mutters a dull echo of antique fatality. The other side of the Provençal character—the mirages of an imagination prompt to treat its dreams as realities—Daudet incarnated in a symbolic hero, the immortal Tartarin. It would be idle to pretend to analyse that trilogy (*Tartarin de Tarascon, Tartarin sur les Alpes, Port-Tarascon*) in which the comic exaggeration, all on the outside,

should not cause the fineness of observation to be lost sight of, in which good nature recovers the epic tone of the *Papers of the Pickwick Club*. In *Numa Roumestan*, the Nimois and the former Secretary of the Duc de Morny unite to represent the ravages of the local politics in a Provençal brain, in a local family. Constructed exclusively on the antithesis of external success and of intimate ruin, *Numa*, if not Daudet's masterpiece, remains perhaps his most characteristic work.

He kept his homesickness for his beloved Provence to the end and always considered himself an exile in Paris. Yet he devoted several novels to describing the life of the capital. These are not, in general, his most successful works. His faults are more clearly apparent in them—want of composition in the narrative, of depth in the characters, of refinement in the plots—above all, abuse of the pretended "document," of the note-book emptied into the novel, of the juxtaposition of the little unrelated touches, of the methods of artistic writing employed without deep necessity. The agreeable unconstraint which served him so well in the *Lettres de mon moulin* or the *Contes du Lundi* ends in frittering. His sincere pity turns into affectation, into a quavering sentimentality, into the parody of himself. *Fromont*, *Le Nabab*, *Les Rois en exil*, hasty frescoes, flake very quickly. In *L'Immortel*, a satire on academic manners and customs, the humorist of *Tartarin* ambitiously raises the tone and spoils an excellent comic subject by a black melodrama. Of the Parisian series two books only stand forth without question: *L'Evangéliste*, an intense, sober psychological study and *Sapho*, a moving picture of a modern love in which, through the pettiness of a contemporary life, passes the breath of the eternally tragic; but, even in his second-rate books, Daudet, in whom a cruel malady still further over-excited the impressionistic talent, kept that charm of tender or mocking sensibility which had assured the success of his first stories.

4. EMILE ZOLA

When, in 1880, appeared the *Soirées de Médan*, a collection of six stories by Zola, Maupassant, Huysmans, Paul Alexis, Céard and Hennique, Zola was already considered the chief of the group and the exponent of the Naturalistic School. As early as 1868, his *Thérèse Raquin* had aroused protests against the "putrid literature" he offered the public. In a preface to the second edition, he had therefore been compelled to explain his aim: "In *Thérèse Raquin*," he wrote, "I wished to study temperaments, not characters. The loves of my two heroes are simply the satisfaction of a desire. The murder they commit is a consequence of their adultery, a consequence they accept as

wolves regard the slaughter of sheep. Finally, what I have been obliged to call their remorse consisted in a simple organic disturbance, a revolt of the nervous system strained to breaking-point." It would be difficult to analyse this crude work more faithfully. What design had Zola in writing it? He himself replies: "My aim was above all a scientific one . . . I have shown the profound disturbance of a full-blooded nature in contact with a nervous nature . . . I have simply done on two living bodies the analytical work surgeons do on corpses."

Persuaded he was obeying a purely scientific preoccupation, was annexing the novel to natural history and to medicine, Zola was astonished, he relates, by the unanimity of the critics in repeating: "The author of the *Thérèse Raquin* is a wretched victim of hysteria who delights in the display of indecency." One can, without questioning his good faith, understand the vanity of his surprise and of his rebellion. From the publication of his first important book appeared that misunderstanding which was to arouse, during his literary career, so many useless tempests. The work of art, when all is said, remains irreducible to any scientific law, however closely it may approach it. The work of art is a choice. The writer always takes sides. Zola himself says: "I have had but one desire: given a vigorous man and an unsatisfied woman, to seek the animal in them, to see nothing but the animal even . . ."

Incapable of denying choice, Zola claimed to explain it by an analogy with science: "The novelist," he says in *Le Roman expérimental*, "is composed of an observer and of an experimenter. The observer in him gives the facts such as he has observed them, determines the starting-point, establishes the solid ground on which the characters will walk and the phenomena develop. Then the experimenter appears and institutes experience, I mean to say makes the characters move in a particular story, in order to show therein that the succession of the facts will be such as the determinism of the studied phenomena requires." His adversaries chose their ground badly when they accused Zola of obscenity. They procured him an easy success by permitting him to affirm the chastity of his anatomical studies and their necessity in "a century of science and of democracy." The true, the only objection to be brought against him—but a capital one, destroying the structure of his system—is that his "experimenter" is nothing but a creator, that *Thérèse Raquin* is just as arbitrary as *Adolphe* or *Obermann*.

From this point of view it has been possible to treat his work disdainfully as "pseudo-science." Zola, a feverish imagination, a Southerner (his Italian origin counts in the formation of his mind), was in-

capable of the prudent, objective patience of the surgeon. He himself was not blind to this contradiction. He has endowed the novelist Sandoz, one of the characters in *L'Œuvre*, with several traits of his own personality. Sandoz, too, aspires to paint "ordinary human creatures evolving under the influence of their environments," and would have liked criticism to quarrel with his audacities, not with the idiotic indecencies attributed to him." Zola, nevertheless, pointed out his weakness with perspicacity: "He [Sandoz] also lamented having been born under the conjunction of Hugo and Balzac." Listen to this declaration of Sandoz's: "Yes, our generation is steeped to its very core in Romanticism, and in vain do we cleanse ourselves by taking baths of violent reality: the stain persists." Here Zola renders justice to the Romantic he never ceased to be.

This Romantic, eager for vast constructions, dictated, at least as much as the pretended scientific practitioner, the plan of the *Rougon-Macquart*, a natural and social history of a family under the Second Empire. It is Zola's monumental work, the most audacious Naturalistic enterprise. Zola defined its import in a brief preface which is the most significant of his numerous literary manifestations. "I want to explain how a family, a small group of beings, behaves in a certain circle of society, expanding to give birth to ten or twenty individuals who, at first sight, appear profoundly dissimilar but whom analysis shows to be intimately connected with one another. Heredity has its laws, like gravity." The series of the *Rougon-Macquart*, in which the novels are but the development of the genealogical tree established by the author, owes all its coherence to this law of heredity: "Physiologically they are the slow succession of the nervous and corpuscular accidents declaring themselves in a race as a consequence of a first organic lesion determining, according to the environment, all the manifestations, human, natural and instinctive, the products of which are known as Virtues and Vices." It is important to emphasize this expression, "according to the environment" and to add that this family "has as a characteristic the irruption of the appetites, the great upheavel of our epoch, which flings itself upon pleasures." We see how Zola enlarges his design, how this story of a family becomes the description of a whole epoch, how, "proceeding from the people, they spread out into contemporary society. They tell the story of the Second Empire."

This profession of faith adds nothing to that which prefaced *Thérèse Raquin*. It simply announces an ampler and more methodical delineation, laying itself open to the same objections. Zola flattered himself nevertheless, not only that he had not distorted the truth, but

that he had been corroborated by it in the experiments he had undertaken: "For three years I had been assembling documents for this great work, when the fall of the Bonapartes, which I needed as an artist and which I always foresaw as inevitable at the end of the drama, without daring to hope for it so soon, came to provide me with the terrible and necessary conclusion of my work." The reader of to-day would readily incline to see in this simple avowal "which I had needed as an artist," a more valuable revelation than in the painful erection of pseudo-scientific theories. These however sustained Zola and permitted him to publish indefatigably, from 1871 to 1893, the twenty volumes of his *Rougon-Macquart*, which Lemaitre justly defined as "a pessimist epic of human nature."

The work has had enormous successes. Zola has sometimes been accused of having courted them and it is beyond doubt that the *Rougon-Macquart* have never been read as scientific studies. At the moment when the last volume, *Docteur Pascal*, appeared, the first of these books, *La Fortune des Rougon*, the keystone of the work, which the author called by its scientific title, *Les Origines*, and which is indispensable for anyone caring to get the meaning of the whole fresco, had reached its twenty-fourth thousand only; but *Nana*, surrounded by a halo of obscenity, had reached its one hundred and sixty-sixth thousand. Zola's books have lost this prestige of immorality. The majority of them are completely neglected by the public, although all do not merit this oblivion. Zola is too often heavy, pedantically childish, needlessly coarse, conscientious without taste. His characters live a lamentably incomplete life. His heavy style creates a stifling atmosphere about them. He sometimes seems at the antipodes, not only of the classic discipline, but of the whole French genius as well.

Not one of his books is entirely admirable. All, in certain chapters at least, provoke ridicule or boredom. Some of them nevertheless remain powerful and, even while stirring repugnance, they compel attention. However artificial these vast constructions may be, they live every time an evocative breath traverses them, when the multitude of details converges and unites—if not harmonizes—in completeness of effect. Such is the case with *La Faute de l'abbé Mouret* in which the description of a garden, the Paradou, obstinately repeated, slips in through all the interstices of the narrative, invades it, inundates it, supplants it. Zola fails in political novels (see *Son Excellence Eugène Rougon*), which demand a subtle psychology, as also in artless tales, for example that *Rêve of* which *Lemaître* said a child could have told it better; but, even in his most confused books, in the *Le Ventre de Paris* or *Pot-Bouille*, he gives distorted objects hallucinating appear-

ances. *L'Assommoir*, a picture of alcoholic madness, has striking passages. *Germinal* depicts the dramatic life of the miners with a savage power. From *La Terre*, in which the peasants are no truer to life than those of George Sand, exhales an odour of sensuality, a physical emotion the force of which is undeniable. *L'Œuvre*, the most carefully written of all his novels, the one in which, utilizing his memories of Manet and Cézanne, he attempted to depict an artistic psychology, does not escape the usual criticism. The physical fatality which weighs upon Claude and Christine weakens the interest of the plot, and one shares Cézanne's revolt at the absurdity of the ending. In spite of these reserves, *L'Œuvre* probably remains the book by Zola which least repels the ordinary reader. Less, certainly, than *La Débâcle*, a tale of the fall of the Empire, of the war and of the Commune, in which, through a thousand long-drawn-out passages, the Naturalistic novel turns into a muddy epic.

Zola is a visionary. This imaginative obsession, still restrained in the *Rougon-Macquart*, was to have, later on, free course in the *Trois Villes* and in the unfinished series of the *Quatre Evangiles*. He had always thought that certain political ideas were the inseparable corollary of the scientific principles he believed in. As early as 1892, Edmond de Goncourt noted his desire to act upon the populace more directly than as a writer. The Dreyfus affair was to furnish him with the opportunity for a propagandist work in which the observer and the experimenter finally disappeared before the romantic visionary as to whom Zola had never, at bottom, been able to deceive others, or perhaps even himself.

5. GUY DE MAUPASSANT

"Maupassant is a very remarkable, a very charming *novelliere*, but a stylist, a great writer, no, no!" Whatever ill feeling may have inspired Edmond de Goncourt to write thus, and even if he be accused at that date (January 9, 1892) of a jealous cruelty, it must nevertheless be admitted that posterity has, on the whole, ratified this judgment. If, in Maupassant's lifetime, the success of the novels sometimes eclipsed that of his tales, the *novelliere* has since taken ample revenge, and no one now disputes him his place among the great French story-tellers.

It is impossible to pass over in silence the influences which aided Maupassant's talent to develop very early its originality. He was born in Normandy, passed there the whole of his childhood, acquired the habit of observing minutely the picturesque characters about him, of collecting the types and the anecdotes in his memory where he found

later, in no wise distorted, these materials for his work. Too much stress cannot be laid upon this point. Maupassant is one of the writers who have most protested against all critical intrusion into their private life. He went so far as to refuse his portrait to the public. Nevertheless the greater part of his narratives are faithful descriptions of his own experiences or are based upon accounts collected by him. His childhood in Haute Normandie, the time spent by him as employé in the Ministries of the Navy and of Public Instruction, his travels in France and abroad, his anxiety concerning the menace of illness, strongly marked a work he wished to be strictly impersonal.

It is a commonplace to recall the influence of Flaubert on Maupassant who was, moreover, neither his nephew nor his godson but, indeed, the most faithful disciple of the "irreproachable master." Flaubert, wishing to give the young man the benefit of his experience, associated him in his quest of documents for *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, subjected him, like a "taskmaster," to the hard discipline of style, teaching him to take a walk in the country, to look at a tree until it appeared to him different from all other trees and, on coming home, to tell in a hundred lines what he had seen; but it must not be forgotten that Maupassant had also felt the influence of Louis Bouilhet. At thirty he still hesitated between poetry and fiction! The same year he published the volume entitled *Des Vers* and, in *Les Soirées de Médan*, the first of his great tales, *Boule de Suif*.

Success put an end to his indecision and showed him clearly his path. Flaubert declared that *Boule de Suif* was a masterpiece which "crushed" all the rest of the volume. *Des Vers* included some ingenious and robust poems but nothing in it betrayed poetic originality. *Boule de Suif*, on the contrary, revealed such rare qualities of inflexible observation, of sober and powerful narration, that this tale made the beginner's name famous. Maupassant entered literary life, as he himself said, "like a meteor." Sure of himself, he published, during the ten years which followed, a series of tales appearing first in newspapers, then collected in volumes, where the life of the Norman peasants, of prostitutes, of *petits bourgeois*, of students, was painted with so brutal a fidelity that it sometimes provoked protests from those who had served as models. The heroes of *La Maison Tellier*, *Mlle. Fifi*, *Contes de la Bécasse*, *Miss Harriet*, *Les Sœurs Rondoli*, passed before the eyes of the reader under so skilfully impersonal a light that this art appeared to be merely the reproduction of reality, and the style, since it seemed so natural, was forgotten.

At the same time, Maupassant inaugurated with *Une Vie* and *Bel-Ami* the series of his novels. To them he brought the same inspiration

and the same gifts. *Une Vie*, faithful to its motto, "the humble truth," related the suffering of a woman who, tortured by her husband, then by her son, found among those she most revered the same weaknesses and the same blemishes. *Bel-Ami* displayed the selfish cynicism of man to woman. Maupassant developed his manner in these books which could be regarded as composed of several tales adroitly united. The psychology in them remained more or less external to the work, the pity being understood rather than expressed. Proud of an apparently inexhaustible fertility (four volumes in 1884, five in 1885), Maupassant gave the impression of a force of nature, of a robust Norman apple-tree bearing regularly its fruit.

All his readers, however, were not equally satisfied. A letter from Taine, dated March 2, 1882, affords proof of this. After praising the young talent of Maupassant, "in many respects Flaubert's true and only successor," Taine pointed out, with as much vision as tact, the two weak points in his works. To begin with, the choice of characters: "I have now only to beg you to add to your observations another series of observations. You depict peasants, *petits bourgeois*, workmen, students and prostitutes. You will doubtless one day depict the cultivated class, the upper *bourgeoisie* . . . In my opinion, civilization is a force." It will be seen how delicately Taine indicated wherein lay the incompleteness of the works which, while pretending to "mirror" all life, depicted especially the aspects of it until then hidden or despised.

Taine's second criticism came no less close to the mark. Maupassant prided himself upon his impartiality. Only a superficial observer could take him at his word. By the choice of his heroes, by his insistence on the ugly aspects of life, he took sides. Taine warned him of it, refusing him the benefit of the doubt: "It is to be remarked secondly," he continued, "that the critical and pessimistic point of view is, like all points of view, arbitrary . . . *En famille* is cruelly true; but if we were returning from Bulgaria, or even from Sicily, the horror and the disgust would give place to esteem and perhaps admiration. We should think very fine a family in which there was so little thieving and no killing. All judgment depends upon the ideal one has chosen. You place yours very high, hence your severity. Our great master Balzac was more indulgent because he proceeded through sympathy . . ." Let us interpret these last lines: amid inevitable oratorical precautions, Taine invited Maupassant to free himself from all the influences which weighed upon him, even Flaubert's, to take as his model Balzac's vast creation, to transform, in short, his narrow Naturalism into a more comprehensive Realism.

Did this advice of Taine's contribute to Maupassant's evolution, or must we attribute it exclusively to the progress of his own reflection? However that may be, the evolution took place—in the direction indicated by the philosopher-critic. If Maupassant never abandoned the vein of the imperturbable *novelliere*, if *Toine*, *Yvette*, and *La Main gauche* continued *La Maison Tellier* and *Mlle. Fifi*, another inspiration appeared, suggesting to him works somewhat different from his first. The novel, *Mont-Oriol*, a simple love-story in which the author confesses an emotion until then carefully suppressed, marks this transitional epoch. Throwing off his attitude of calm detachment, Maupassant made therein certain personal confidences to the reader with regard, notably, to that passion for solitude which he was again to celebrate in *Sur l'eau*.

In 1888 he published *Pierre et Jean* which is, historically, his most significant work, since in it the two tendencies clash. The novel is, indeed, preceded by a preface in which the ideas set forth "would lead rather to criticism of the kind of psychological study undertaken in *Pierre et Jean*." After noting the impossibility of giving a definition of the novel applicable at once to *Don Quixote*, to *Le Rouge et le Noir*, *to Salammbô* and to *Monte Cristo*, Maupassant studies the two opposing forms of the psychological and of the objective novel. He declares that there is found in the realistic novel a gain in life and sincerity and that "talented realists should rather be called illusionists." For the realist, if he be an artist, will seek, not to show us the banal photograph of life, but to give us a completer vision of it, more striking, more searching than reality itself." Through this liberty with regard to truth which he claims to modify in the name of verisimilitude, through his championship of the power of choice possessed by the artist, Maupassant differs from Zola. He is opposed to the Goncourts through his love of a clear style, through his repudiation of "the weird, complicated, overloaded and Chinese vocabulary imposed upon us nowadays under the name of artistic writing."

And, having laid down these principles, he writes a psychological novel. The drama of *Pierre et Jean*, in which the elder of two brothers discovers little by little that the younger is only his half-brother, passes entirely within the consciousness of the mother and of her two sons. Maupassant's last two novels accentuated this evolution still further. A new public—that which had not been conquered by *Ce cochon de Maurin*—was moved by the bitterness of *Fort comme la Mort* and by the tragic sobriety of *Notre Cœur*. Through psychology Maupassant escaped from realism.

He escaped from it by yet another road. Literary historians would

have no right to dwell upon the cruel malady which was to wreck Maupassant's reason had it not left profound traces in his work. It has been pointed out that at least a dozen of his tales treat the same subject: the horror of death and the feeling of fear, the irresistible fear which is "like a decomposition of the soul," he says in a tale entitled *La Peur*. What is more, in three tales, *Lui* (1884), *Le Horla* (1887), *Qui sait?* (1890), he utilized his own experiences for the purpose of studying the loss of personality and of hallucination, describing in them phenomena to which it has been possible to give medical names. Here we enter the region of pure fantasy, ranging from external autoscopy to absolute madness. Yet never was his art more harshly, more pitilessly precise than in these descriptions of the invisible, of the nonexistent, of the phantoms evoked by a disordered brain, an agonizing mixture of lucidity and of delirium. Whatever might have been the horror of his physical ruin, he was spared the supreme downfall: "I do not wish to outlive myself!" he said to a friend in November, 1891. "I entered literary life like a meteor, I will leave it like a thunderbolt." This wish, at least, was fulfilled. Let the rest be silence.

6. J.-K. HUYSMANS

It is to Joris-Karl Huysmans that Thibaudet's epigram on the Naturalists is most applicable: "The weakest of their works is certainly themselves." There is indeed no connection, unless by way of ironic contrast, between the bourgeois life of Huysmans, head of a department in the Ministry of Public Instruction, and the wild evocations which fill his books. If a persistent, determined taste for translating the most spiritual realities into pictures and concrete phrases allowed Huysmans, to the end, to be classed among the Naturalists, it should at once be added that no one was less objective. His whole work denotes the unfolding of a madly materialistic imagination, of a sort of Verhaeren liberated by no poetry, who never knew any "*heures claires*," who was never capable of rising to the contemplation of "*la multiple splendeur*."

His first works disclose the lack of balance which threatens every Naturalistic creation: *Le Drageoir aux epices* does not escape it any more than does *Les Sœurs Vatard*. *En ménage*, the most important of his Naturalistic novels, demonstrates it abundantly. Huysmans here pretended to depict contemporary life in the story of two friends: a writer, André and a painter, Cyprien. André, a somewhat queer character ("he had been uninterruptedly middling, he had been *M. Tout le Monde*"), marries a woman, Berthe, who is decidedly his superior.

Having surprised her with a lover, he succeeds in recovering his liberty which he forthwith transfers into the hands of an old servant, then of a harlot, finally of a former mistress whom he encounters again. When this latter has forsaken him, there is nothing left for him but to get Berthe back from the grotesque relatives where she was waiting. Cyprien, too, during this time, has fallen victim to a vulgar *collage* and formulates the conclusion: "After all, concubinage and marriage are of equal value since they have both freed us from artistic imaginings and from fleshly sorrows. No more talent or health—what a dream!" The pessimism, latent in Zola, here asserts itself. Huysmans does declare, in places, that modern life contains unknown beauties. This remains a profession of theoretical faith. What oozes from the whole book is misanthropy, hatred for this incurably vulgar, ugly, stupid world: "It is not a bad thing to be emptied as we are," murmurs Cyprien; "for now every concession has been made, perhaps the eternal human stupidity will have some use for us." Is then, the Naturalistic novel a perpetual recurrence of *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, a contrivance for the artist to avenge himself?

Conscious of this failure with respect to the society of his time, Huysmans blamed Romanticism for it: "Ah! If we were not all, every one of us, gangrened with Romanticism; if, instead of our infection, we did not confine ourselves to whitewashing it, we should see many other modern beauties which escape us!" This Naturalist-Romantic was reduced to flight. He thus produced the most curious of his works, *A Rebours*, a flamboyantly realistic stained-glass window. His hero, Des Esseintes, is persuaded of this truth, that "nature has had her day, she has finally wearied the attentive patience of the refined by the disgusting uniformity of her skies and her landscapes." The important thing then is "to substitute the dream of reality for reality itself." Des Esseintes creates an artificial paradise, a disconcerting mixture of ingenuity and puerility. He calls to his aid all the excitants, composes symphonies of colours, of precious stones, of liqueurs, of perfumes, of make-ups, of flowers—of which he favours chiefly the natural ones which have an artificial look—of music, admitting that only "which grates on his nerves." An hour at the Bodega stands him in stead of a trip to London. An aquarium aids him to transform his dining-room into a maritime illusion. Painting, with Gustave Moreau, is a precious auxiliary for him. Literature even more: Latin literature which dates from Petronius; French literature in which he retains Villon, several sacred orators and theological writers, finally a few moderns, Baudelaire, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Flau-

bert, Goncourt, Zola, Villiers de L'Isle Adam, Verlaine, Corbière et Mallarmé. Moreover in these latter he hails a decadence, not a dawn. He attains his supreme triumph the day his doctor prescribes him a nourishing peptonized injection, seeing in this "a decisive insult hurled at old nature." Brief apogee. Condemned to resume normal life once more, Des Esseintes returns to Paris with no other hope of salvation from "the tide-race of human mediocrity" than the gleam in his soul of belief in a future life.

A Rebours marks the turning-point in Huysmans' life and work. The whole book is interspersed with appeals to Catholicism. He feels himself attracted by the subtleties and intricacies of theological doctrines, finding in them a community with his eccentric speculations. He loves Catholic monuments, ecclesiastical furniture and vestments. Human mediocrity alone still forms an obstacle between faith and himself. The *bondieuseries* of the Saint-Sulpice quarter turn his stomach. He is exasperated by the language of Catholic writers, "that white language, that flux of the phrase which no astringent can stop." He struggles then and, in order to escape from religion, throws himself into the magic which is its sacrilegious parody; but the Black Mass in *Là-Bas* is only a stage on the appointed way.

Thereafter Huysmans' works—works with significant titles—were merely the faithful description of the road followed to the moment of total conversion. From this point of view, *En Route* and *L'Oblat* furnish the psychologist with useful information. Huysmans further gave frequent proofs of his zeal by accounts of sanctity or studies of religious monuments. His last book was dedicated to the glorification of Lourdes and, compared with Zola's, shows the route travelled by each of these Naturalists since *Les Soirées de Médan.* A keener interest attaches to *La Cathédrale.* The protagonist, Durtal-Huysmans, here confesses in literary wise his horror of provincial life, his rebellion against the banality of certain priests, his humble repentances. *La Cathédrale* also offers a living picture of the ecclesiastical world, from Abbé Gévresin, the clever director of consciences, and the learned Abbé Plomb, to the holy simplicity of Mme. Bavoil and the inane tittle-tattle "of the pious bourgeoisie wherein is recruited the fine flower of feminine Pharisees." Above all this book contains an amorously persistent description, at once literal and symbolic, completed by manifold comparisons with other French cathedrals, of that masterpiece of mediæval architecture, Notre Dame de Chartres which Huysmans, even if he can be criticized with regard to certain archæological interpretations, has succeeded in evoking alive in a spell of sacred enchantment.

For, however limited Huysmans may be intellectually, however child-

ish his conception of the world may appear, the style always saves his work from mediocrity. In modern literature he esteemed above all "the superb, spotted style of the Goncourts and the highly flavoured style of Verlaine and Mallarmé." His personal style is commensurate with his admirations. Violent, loaded with material details, with sudden sarcastic outbursts, it always remains equally imaginative. One may detest it, but whoever has a taste for it will rarely find a lapse. For it takes possession of the writer, as clear-cut and spirited, apropos of the most diverse subjects. Here is a genre picture: "Almost merry, they went to give themselves to sleep, that symbol of death, as M. Désableau called it, in their bedroom; and there, after he had wound up his watch, the husband, taking off his coat and waistcoat, showed a back which two pink suspenders quartered with a Saint Andrew's Cross" (*En Ménage*, p. 99). Here is an artistic commentary: "Alone, in fact, the enlightened century managed to envelop woman with a vicious atmosphere, fashioning the furniture according to the form of her charms, imitating the contractions of her pleasure, the volutes of her spasms, in the undulations, the contortions of wood and of copper, spicing the dulcet languors of the blonde with its sharp, clear setting, attenuating the briny flavour of the brunette with upholstery of soft, watery, almost insipid tones" (*A Rebours*, p. 87). Here is a psychological description: "The account he could draw up of his person was balanced by inner damages and intimate quarrels. If his soul was benumbed and bruised, his mind was no less sore and tired. He seemed to have become blunted. Those biographies of saints which Durtal proposed to write, lay in the state of sketches, evaporating as soon as he attempted to give them definite form" (*La Cathédrale*, p. 111). Even if Huysmans' books were to fall into public oblivion, literary men would always linger over them, as over those authors of the Latin decadence he so passionately loved.

7. JULES RENARD

From a strictly chronological point of view one may be astonished that Jules Renard's name should follow immediately after Huysmans'; but we have seen that Naturalism always ends in escape from Naturalism. From the crude painting of the naked truth the Goncourts escaped by their impressionistic mobility, Daudet by the freshness of his Provençal fantasy, Zola by his lyrical imagination, Maupassant by psychology and the fantastic, Huysmans by an art in which the "writing" was infinitely more important than the "subject." This demonstration could not be better completed than by studying the epigrammatic Naturalism of Jules Renard.

The quality whereby Jules Renard first of all holds our attention is loyalty. This conscientious virtue has a double aspect, positive and negative. It explains the form adopted by him, his regard for finish. It also explains his refusal to generalize any experience, his resolve, in portraying peasants, never to go beyond what he had seen, simply "to reproduce a few traits of that fierce, primitive figure, only a shade sad and rather reassuring." His known work is fairly brief. What he published of it was even less. He did not give the public his first novel, *Les Cloportes*, which is already the book of his village, attesting his hatred of romantic plots and his desire to refine the Goncourts' *écriture artiste* to the point of perfection. *L'Œil clair* is also a posthumous publication. We find gathered in it, side by side with more negligible fragments, documents in which the artist familiarly defines himself, in which he puts us, for example, on our guard against "the professional enthusiasm of the humorist," in which we see the writer, the countryman, and the republican at work in a triple unity. In it must be more particularly cited the curious *Lettres à l'Amie*, a mixture of subtleties and brutalities with equal over-elaboration, with their alternating unconstraint and pitiless self-irony, in which he notes one of his own characteristic traits, "a sort of inverted delicacy."

This "inverted delicacy" which prevented him from sparing Daudet the painful effort of picking up his stick so as not to increase the moral embarrassment caused by this physical pain, Jules Renard carried into the whole of his work. There still remains a trace of the Romantic in Jules Renard, if we are to consider as a mark of the Romantic the incapacity to accept life simply and without adopting towards it a preconcerted attitude. This appears already in *L'Ecornifleur* where the narrative carries the assumption of haughty detachment to the point of improbability. The clearsightedness with regard to himself turns to sourness. This pretended confession becomes a pessimistic anatomical chart. The hero, a false man of letters, a false friend, a false lover, remains throughout an *écornifleur;* but is it quite natural that he should thus reveal his parasitic quality? Doubly ironical expressions like "the bourgeois is the person who has not my ideas" or "have I held up my end? I do not remember having fallen below my level" are rather out of keeping in the mouth of so sorry an individual.

The secondary characters appear truer: M. Vernet who is perhaps merely a Lepic grown rich and stupid; Mme. Vernet, a sentimental *bourgeoise;* their niece, Marguerite, who develops so curiously; but however skilful the description of the little Norman watering-place, this book, though short, is not exempt from tedious passages. Above all it

is too visibly an exercise, a construction on the literary theme furnished by the Goncourts: "To let, a second-hand parasite."

Poil de Carotte is Jules Renard's most celebrated work. The humorist is not absent from it to give impact to the "*mots*" of his characters, nor the stylist enamoured of refinement; but this book, where the observation is so rich one hesitates to call it a novel, owes its value to its creation of a type and its evocation of an environment. In *Poil de Carotte*, which so quickly became popular, Jules Renard has drawn the portrait of the miserable, clumsy child oppressed, in varying degrees, by a shrewish mother, a selfish father and a profiteering brother and sister. The picture might easily have become conventional. It remains admirably true because, as a counterpoise, it implies, on the part of Poil de Carotte, a series of sly revenges. The victim of his family, he is not a child-martyr idealized in literary fashion. He is sly, fearful, as cruel towards animals as are his parents towards him. The drama remains latent, the pessimism inexpressed, the comic reestablishing a welcome balance. Not that analysis ever abdicates. With just a touch of caricatural exaggeration, Mme. Lepic is terribly true. None of the unclean details of the Pension St. Marc is hidden from us; but once again is recognized in this book the power of suggestion possessed by rigid lines. From this realistic description emanates a mystery. The most detailed, the most original character in the book, M. Lepic, is not an enigma for his son alone. In him, as in Poil de Carotte, stir strange, confused things they will never succeed in becoming aware of; but beneath the ridiculous phrases pronounced by them this lends their talk a sort of rudimentary poetry which occasionally stirs the emotions.

This poetry peculiar to Jules Renard—poetry inverted like his delicacy—reappears in a work which presents united the diverse aspects of his talent, *Le Vigneron dans sa vigne*. Here he confesses his personal beliefs, his sincere love of the peasantry which does not blind him however to the differences between them and himself. *Les Tablettes d'Eloi* contains the most vigorous arraignment of the hypocrisies of modern life and preaches, by example, the necessity for a pitiless self-examination. *Le Vigneron* offers many a trait of easy observation, of those country dialogues, more characterized than Maupassant's, which were the secret of *Ragotte's* success. It contains travel notes full of quick sketches and of exercises in verbal virtuosity. It ends with *Histoires naturelles* which is the author's most perfect achievement, the logical outcome of his literary ideal. Indeed Jules Renard, like the Goncourts' whom he admired, devoted himself wholly to

the service of his art. Not that he saw in it, after the fashion of the Romantics, a priesthood; but he found a beauty and a grandeur in those virtues of conscientiousness and of discipline which the title of writer exacts of an honest man: "Yes, man of letters," he wrote in *Le Vigneron;* "I shall be one to the day of my death . . . and if, by chance, I am immortal, I shall devote myself, throughout eternity, to literature. And never do I tire of writing, and I write eternally, and I don't give a damn for the rest, like the vine-grower treading his wine-press."

The very subject of *Les Histoires naturelles* confines the writer within the exact limits which Jules Renard desired: to observe an object and to portray it—the art of the painter, if you will, but of the literary painter who must evoke rather than represent. Jules Renard's entire work tends towards this simplification because he aims at this simplicity: to offer, of nature and of mankind, something like instantaneous photographs expressing at once the object and the mind's reaction. The simplest method is that which adds a literal image to the description: "This evening the setting sun is a dirty yellow. One would say it had eaten an egg." Another step and the comparison will widen out: "The green of these gardens rejoices my eye like a display of cutlery. Let us strive to cast rings on these points." Advancing still further, Jules Renard suppresses all the relationships underlying two ideas: "Ah! I can breathe here! Yes, it is the favourite climate of the scrofulous." Finally, supreme refinement, the intellectual idea takes concrete form: "I write only from life and I wipe my pens on a living poodle." The success of this epigrammatic realism is the impossibility for the reader to decide where the thought ends and the image begins, so intimately are they involved in each other.

It is easy to conceive that the animal portraits offered an adequate matter for all his gifts of humour, of fancy, of precision and of patience. For this illusion of the instantaneous is the reward of a long subconscious gestation and of a methodical labour. Picturesqueness and poetry are the two qualities of *Les Histoires naturelles* and Maurice Ravel was not mistaken when he saw in these pieces of highly wrought prose a certain degree of musical suggestion. On an instrument which might have been believed monotonous, Jules Renard plays subtly varied airs. He passes from comic satire (*La Pintade*) to the unexpected pun (*Les Fourmis*), to the half-mocking, half-sincere lyricism of *Le Cygne;* from mystification (*Le Serpent*) or from evocative brevity (*Le Cafard:* "black and stuck on like a keyhole"), to great ordered pictures (*La Vache*) and to the freshest poetry: "I held my

breath, quite proud to be taken for a tree by a kingfisher; and I am sure it did not fly away through fear, but because it believed it was merely passing from one branch to another" (*Le Martin-Pêcheur*). When he attains such perfection, Jules Renard's art evokes the memory of Japanese prints in which an animal, a tree or a branch makes the whole picture, filling the spirit with a mysterious joy. The Goncourts' influence aiding the natural bend of his genius, Jules Renard avoided Zola's naturalism to arrive at the realism of Hokusaï.

8. NATURALISM IN THE THEATRE

For evident reasons it is above all in the novel that Naturalism triumphed. In poetry one can at most trace its influence in the familiar pictures by Coppée and by Aicard. It made, however, a great effort to conquer the theatre and, if it failed, at least this attempt left some traces.

The French stage continued to be fed by writers who had obtained their first success under the Second Empire. We have already spoken of verse drama. Light comedy was represented by Meilhac and Halévy and, with a finer but less spontaneous verve, by Edouard Pailleron whose *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie* adjusts *Les Femmes savantes* to the taste of the *salons* of 1880. With a very supple skill, Victorien Sardou triumphed in amusing comedy as well as in drama, even melodrama. He aspired merely to interest the public and he succeeded. The two masters of the theatre up to 1880 remained Emile Augier and Alexandre Dumas *fils*.

The contrast between these rivals, who were not however entirely without mutual influence, has become a commonplace. Both succeeded fairly well in the bourgeois play, the serious comedy, such as it had been conceived by Diderot, but with ideas and by methods often opposed. Augier never attempted to scandalize the *bonne bourgeoisie* to which he belonged. It is true that, after a period of groping, of neo-classical limitations, he had renounced the heritage of Ponsard and attempted the comedy of manners; but he persisted in his conservatism, in the defence of the family, of the home, of tradition which, it seemed to him, were threatened by the moral dissolution, contemporary effrontery and banter insidiously sapping established order. He carried on his struggle in solid, well-contructed plays, without excessive verve, which were interesting through their qualities of healthy ponderation but in which uniformity rather quickly provokes boredom. Augier wrote for the average public. This needs to have the truths it considers eternal repeated to it each generation in the exact language of its time. Never having aimed at holding the attention of the curious

reader whom no obstacle will turn from the work in which he has discovered some originality, Augier has completely passed away with his public.

It is not the same with Dumas. With a fiery ardour, he attacked all the prejudices flattered by Augier. Even when he had abjured the flaming romanticism of *La Dame aux Camélias*, he always retained some characteristics of the preacher who loves to call the sin by its name and describes it before denouncing it. In the theatre, he aspired to carry on a crusade, preaching the holiness of love in all its forms, the equality of woman and man, the sacred character of the union, the cowardice of the thousand hypocrisies which borrow of true passion merely its mask. Haunted by his own visions he turned towards the end into an apocalyptic prophet. If *Une Visite de noces* forms a fairly successful realistic one-act play, *La Femme de Claude* is scarcely more than a staged sermon. In spite of all his defects, those who like a writer to be first of all an original temperament will forgive Dumas much, because of a certain taste for paradox in the matter and in the form which prevents his work from aging too completely. If the brutal sallies, the mordant sayings thanks to which Dumas overcame the objections of his audiences appear to us nowadays artificial, if the long tirades in which he usurps the place of his protagonists irritate us by their lack of verisimilitude, the reading of Dumas' plays—and above all of their truculent prefaces—remains nevertheless very amusing—so far at times as to give an impression of life not always confirmed by the acting.

This social comedy of Dumas and Augier did not constitute a Naturalistic theatre. The Naturalistic novelists deemed it indispensable to make their theories triumph on the stage as well as in the novel. No one appeared to them better qualified for this enterprise than themselves. In fact the idea of the theatre haunted them. Turn by turn Goncourt, Zola, Daudet, Maupassant and Renard tried their hand at it. *Poil de Carotte* and *Le Pain de ménage* are still listened to with pleasure and *L'Arlésienne* has enjoyed a lasting favour due to sentimental qualities without anything properly speaking realistic. Once shorn of the imagination which, in the fictional form, dissimulated their poverty, the plots of Zola's plays have merely furnished poor melodramas, very inferior to d'Ennery's.

One name only of a real theatrical writer marks the Realist epoch, Henry Becque's. After having been unjustly rejected by all the theatres, Becque's plays have been rather immoderately extolled. Becque has left two important pieces: *Les Corbeaux*, where a manufacturer's widow struggles among rogues with her three daughters one of

whom is reduced to marrying the worst rascal and *La Parisienne* which shows how a little *bourgeoise* may live serenely between her husband and her lover. These two plays are chiefly interesting because of their convention, of a sort of inverted idealization. Becque eliminates all purpose, he transports to the theatre scenes of daily life minutely observed and cruelly reproduced. He reduces the plot to the rôle of a mere link. Here again, however, there is a choice. Real life has not this sustained spitefulness or this even flatness which he lends it. His bitter point of view is revealed in the ferocity of certain expressions, in the contrast between the situations and his actor's speeches. Becque's art is undeniable but its limits are quickly detected.

There was, however, a lesson to be drawn for the theatre from the Naturalistic movement. Dumas and Augier were the slaves of numerous conventions. The need of a return to the truth was felt. The creation of the *Théâtre Libre* responded to this necessity. Its founder, Antoine, appealed to the authors of "cynical" comedies and "slices of life." That these exercises, useful in the beginning on the score of reaction, quickly became factitious, that the authors who, like Georges Ancey, remained imprisoned in the formula of the *Théâtre Libre*, never produced a masterpiece, cannot be denied; but it must not be forgotten that Curel, Brieux, Courteline and others who were to count among the best contemporary dramatists, made their first appearance at the *Théâtre Libre*. Here Naturalism, counterbalancing the Romantic influence, opened the door to all free initiatives.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANTI-NATURALISTIC REACTION

1. INFLUENCES. BARBEY D'AUREVILLY

LITERARY history does not lend itself readily to sharp divisions. In introducing them for the sake of clearness in the account, sight should not be lost of the fact that there is always a sort of overlapping between two successive periods. A generation which has arrived produces its most characteristic works at the moment when that which is to supplant it begins. *Sapho* and *A rebours* appeared in 1884, *Germinal* and *Bel-Ami* in 1885. The novel appeared to have become the fief of the Naturalists. Four years later, Jules Huret could open an inquiry on the decline of Naturalism. During the ten years covered by Maupassant's career influences had been felt, works had been accomplished which had profoundly modified the mentality of both writers and public.

There is in the effort of the majority of thinkers a sort of negative period during which they clear the ground and seek the solid soil on which to establish their truth. In this first part of their work, Taine and Renan had, up to a certain point, been able to appear as the allies of the Realists; but when the time came for each to construct his own dogmatic edifice (there is no need to strain words to speak of Renan's dogmatism), it was seen that the author of *Les Origines* and that of *Le Prêtre de Némi* had nothing in common with Zola save a few enemies. It was the same with Stendhal whom certain Naturalists had thought to annex. His admirers soon discovered that the psychologist in him was infinitely more important than the Realist, that his work was less a picture of French or Italian customs than an indefatigable abstract analysis of the secret movements of the human heart.

Limited to Stendhal alone, this sudden reaction would have been taxed with superficiality, attributed to certain resemblances between Julien Sorel or Fabrice del Dongo and the adolescents of another post-war period; but all the signs agreed in showing that the external descriptions of the Naturalists had wearied, that they were provoking a reversion towards those psychologists who had studied the soul and its mechanism—internal conflicts in preference to collective settings.

Adolphe, Obermann—all the heroes of solitary meditation—enjoyed a timely revival. In 1883–84 appeared the two volumes of Henri-Frédéric Amiel's *Journal intime.* Despite the protestations of Brunetière who detected, in this minute, intense, almost sickly observer of his own consciousness, the old Romantic enemy, many contemporaries found in him the echo of their own preoccupations, a faithful image of the spiritual crisis through which they were passing. Paul Bourget thus interpreted their impressions: "Like Taine and like Renan, Amiel was imbued with Germanic ideas and attempted to adjust these to the exigencies of his purely Latin education. Like Stendhal, like Flaubert, like so many others less illustrious, he incurred the consequences of the abuse of the analytical spirit. Like Leconte de Lisle and like Baudelaire, he attempted to escape in dream, having suffered too much from life."

The first act of this generation to which Stendhal, Baudelaire, Amiel had, by different paths, taught the worship of the ego, was to render homage to a writer until then unjustly ignored. Forty years after the publication of his first book, Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly seemed to Zola nothing more than "a grotesque of our literature . . . a sculptured gargoyle, grimacing and highly wrought, without, moreover, the slightest humanity, lost in a cathedral corner." Some years later Zola could hear the majority of the young writers pronounce this name as that of a respected master. Besides, their respect was addressed, like ours, even more to the man than to his work. Barbey's writings do not always, at first sight, justify his reputation. In order to appreciate them fully, it is necessary to evoke the silhouette of the proud musketeer who traversed the nineteenth century as a Royalist and Catholic gentleman, always ready to doff his hat and to defend his double faith with pen or with sword, keeping resolutely covered when he passed the cortège of one of those false gods adored by his century. Lamartine, in a happy phrase, had surnamed him "the Duc de Guise of our literature."

When we keep before our eyes this picture of the man, it is more easily explicable that a contemporary reader does not prefer Barbey's more finished works. For a long time a mystery surrounded those poems which the author guarded jealously, merely divulging his intention of calling them *Poussières*—a title which appears to us to-day only too justified. We find in them the whole Romantic heritage—theatrical gestures and attitudes, readily oratorical vehemences. Their sentiments are little varied. The consciousness of the mortal menace hovering over love and an inflexible proud elevation form their monotonous refrain. It is the same with the prose poems, even that garrulous

Amaidée, written before 1840 and published by Bourget in 1889, which deserves to live only because of the characteristic note which Barbey then added: "When he wrote these pages, the author was entirely ignorant of life. His soul deeply intoxicated by his reading and his dreams, he asked of human pride what he has since learned two poor pieces of wood in the form of a cross alone can give and give eternally."

Whatever the merits of *Une Vieille Maîtresse*, of *L'Ensorcelée*, of *Le Chevalier Destouches* and of *Les Diaboliques*, it is not in fiction that Barbey d'Aurevilly excels. He took up a position the reverse of Realism: "What matters," he wrote in the preface to *L'Ensorcelée*, "the exact, *stippled* truth, meticulous as to facts, provided the horizons are visible!" Unfortunately, if he freed himself from the preoccupations of a servile copy of reality, he is none the less prisoner of certain personal prejudices. First of all there is a scornful hatred for "the terrible movement of modern thought." In his novels the satire hurts the narrative without daring fully to take its place. His militant Catholicism produces another rupture in the artistic balance between the author and his work. No doubt he strove to be impartial and complete: "The author has made use of that great Catholic breadth which does not fear to touch human passions when the aim is to instil dread of their consequences"; but with him, as with Baudelaire, the imagination was chiefly stimulated by the Satanic side which is the shadow of the pure Christian light. It is easy to understand the fascination of orthodoxy conceived as a narrow road to left and right of which lie in wait for us all the sins, among them the demon of pride, so alluring to lofty natures. Nevertheless, this attitude which lends so acrid an after-taste to the songs of the poet, does not fail to give a certain monotony to the creations of the novelist. Barbey finally undertook to rehabilitate the Chouans of the Cotentin; but here history intervenes less as a psychological explanation of the characters than as a pretext for oratorical periods: "While the Vendéans, those warriors of the great race, sleep, tranquil and immortal, under the praise of Napoleon, and can wait, covered by such an epitaph, for the historian who has not yet come, the Chouans, those guerrillas, have nothing to draw them from obscurity and to preserve them from insult." Weighed down by so many after thoughts, the narrative rarely becomes animated save in the tragic passages where such mysterious heroes as the Chevalier Destouches, M. Jacques and the Abbé de la Croix-Jugan are able to bring into play all their Byronic corsair violence. Elsewhere it is only too manifest that the personality of the writer stifles the life of the work.

Those who knew Barbey agree he was a wonderful talker: "He can not only speak," said Paul Bourget, "but he has style in speaking, and metaphor and poetry." The spell under which he held his hearers Barbey d'Aurevilly still exerts over the readers of his critical and analytical works from which it has been possible to extract a brilliant anthology under the title of *L'Esprit de Barbey d'Aurevilly*. Here there is no longer any obstacle between the author and his public. He gives himself to us in his proud humility: "A man who writes must make up his mind manfully and silently to be misjudged. In defending one's own thought, one always defends one's vanity, and that is inferior. Through it man loses his pride." For Barbey there was nothing more legitimate than this distinction between vanity and pride. He lives again under our eyes in this dual ideal of monk and of warrior explaining his admiration for Bossuet, who "turns his violet cassock up to his knees and marches with military stride through all his narratives" and his indulgence for Stendhal who "had kept in his thought something or other of the soldier." As to the brilliant talker, we seem to hear his voice in the pages devoted to Brummel or to Mme. de Sévigné, "Elmire and Célimène" curiously blended.

In addition, this part of his work remains a precious testimony as to his epoch. No doubt here again his personal prejudices play an important part, and he despises this age "one end of which plunges into atheism, the other into a weakened Christianity"; but his own Catholicism does not rob him of any clearsightedness. With fine perception he notes, speaking of Schopenhauer, that "it would certainly have served him better to have read Chamfort than to have meditated Kant." Sometimes, even, religion sharpens a prophetic vision in him. In 1884, after *A rebours*, he offered Huysmans, as formerly Baudelaire, the dilemma of pistol and cross. His hatred of Realism was not devoid of extremely just differentiations. He knew and said: "The Goncourts are writers only through sheer lust to turn a brilliant sentence no matter upon what." All the weight of his brutal attacks he reserved for Zola, "that soiled Hercules who rakes up the dung of Augias and adds to it." As early as 1877, he announces the death of Naturalism through exhaustion. For "what step of infamy and of filth remains to be descended?" . . . "Mud is not infinite." To this defeat of Naturalism his books and his personal influence largely contributed.

2. IDEALISM. VILLIERS DE L'ISLE-ADAM

A militant idealism, far removed from the sham, insipid idealism of Octave Feuillet's novels—such is also the dominant trait of Villiers de L'Isle-Adam's works; but here, however attractive the figure of the

writer, his production deserves to remain in the foreground, its author's personal tastes being retained only as a thread permitting a more living study of these luxuriant, harmonious books.

Seen with the perspective afforded by the passing of thirty years, Villiers' work presents itself then as an ample symphony a few easily discernible motives of which ensure the supple unity. For they themselves all derive from a unique and fundamental concord which—stripping it for an instant of its multiple power of sonorous creations—the critic might formulate in these three affirmations: Breton, gentleman and Catholic.

The last two terms of this definition eliminate the memory of the Breton Renan with whom Villiers, in fact, shares only the love of soaring revery. They permit a comparison with Chateaubriand of whom Villiers is truly the successor. Their differences are sufficiently justified by the unfolding between them of the Romanticism of which one was the first, the other the last great prose-writer—a haughty, disabused Romanticism which is, perhaps, merely a borrowed attitude for Chateaubriand but which penetrated Villiers' soul—an ideal to which he lent all the refinement of his genius before burying it under the crypts at Auërsperg.

He himself came victorious out of this temptation, saved by his faith. It is possible to question Chateaubriand's Catholicism. Villiers' is inexpugnable. He has meditated the archdeacon's words in *Axël:* "I believe her to be endowed with that terrible gift, intelligence. Then let her tremble, unless she becomes a saint. Revery has lost so many souls." The sin of pride can strike with sterility the work the most fertile in its origin. His religion protects it from this. It places a mystic certitude at the centre of his aspirations. It keeps human a satire of the modern world which would have risked becoming extremely monotonous.

Villiers detested with all his might the ambient universe where neither the ideals he served nor he himself found the place due them. He had preserved a very lively sense of his nobility and proudly insisted upon his quality of "gentleman," sometimes in the mystic silence of his Axël, sometimes after the fashion of Commander Kaspar who "pronounces this word on almost every possible occasion, like a bourgeois." Now the practical, sceptical, democratic society in which he lived embodied precisely the apparent triumph of what he regarded as "Null." It is easy to conceive his having jeered at it mercilessly as soon as he had found his original note. His first poems, in spite of the sincerity of their Christian appeal, were, with their mottos taken from

Shakespeare and from *Faust*, merely clever imitations of Musset, Vigny and Lamartine. Verse lent itself neither to the great flights nor to the sharp, distilled vengeances meditated by him. He created his own instrument, a poetic prose whose music has alternately a marmorean hardness and the caress of falling rose-leaves. An ironist, he cast the full weight of those grave periods, heavy as feudal lances, against contemporary vices. He aimed sumptuous ridicule at the belief in equality and in general talent. He showed, with tragic humour, "of what atrocious sadness modern laughter is made." He stigmatized "modern sentimentality" at length, never ceasing to lash "a species in which the weakening of every belief, of every disinterested enthusiasm, of every noble or sacred love, threatens to become endemic." As in the lists, his argumentative Romanticism tilted against "all the intellectual tinsel of science," claimed by the eternal Philistines as their own. His hatreds he embodied in what he defined as "an enormous, sombre buffoonery, matching the century." *Tribulat Bonhomet* whose hero, *professeur agrégé* of physiology, kills swans to hear their death-song, is "one of those elect of life" who feel "their body lightened, their mind eclectic, their heart forever free, their convictions contingent—and their conscience vacant." Doubtless in this portrait of "the archetype of his century," the stroke is at times too insistent. Villiers is carried away. One notes that in the English literature he loved he appreciated Byron's rhetoric and invectives rather than Shelly's pure lyricism; but often, in the *Contes*, in *Les Demoiselles de Bienfilâtre* or *L'Amour sublime*, the irony proceeds by insinuations, the art becomes finer and the invisible arrow, detected only by its indignant vibration, strikes the adversary full in the heart.

This is merely the negative aspect of Villiers' genius. If he destroys, it is in the name of a construction. He denies alleged reality because he believes in all that is incorporeal. Accustomed to the mysterious regions where habitual intercourse loosens those concatenations which are adamantine for their dupes alone, a truly Catholic imagination disports itself with ease in the unexplained. It is not necessary to invoke Poe's influence to explain the fascination for Villiers of certain strange or gruesome subjects, of the exploration of the singular phenomena arising in the vague mist on the confines of the known world. The enigmatic *Claire Lenoir* and numerous stories are thus inspired. His position in this particular has been exactly defined by Villiers in one of the stories in *L'Amour suprême:* "I speak here exclusively from the point of view of Christian faith, recognizing moreover the value of no other point of view either in this question or in any other"; but

he also considered that Catholicism should not fear to follow science on the strangest grounds where it may please to venture. Thus did he justify intellectually his taste for occultism or for phenomena of the transmission of personality. *L'Eve future* is the most imposing evidence of this effort. "I interpret," he says in his preface, "a modern legend in the interest of the work of metaphysical art of which I have conceived the idea." One of the heroines, Alicia—an example of the non-correspondence of the physical and the intellectual—"is afflicted with that so-called contemptible negative good sense which simply narrows everything." Edison undertakes "to remove the soul from this body," "to print a second proof of the living" incarnated in the automaton Halady. Here Villiers utilizes the progress of that very science the vanity of which he has so often denounced; and suddenly, by one of those turns where genius declares itself by signifying more than it says, he pays homage to his enemy's splendour: "You have," says Ewald to Edison, "a kind of Positivism capable of putting the imagination of the Arabian Nights into the shade."

For Villiers denied himself none of the paths leading to freedom. Doubtless allowance must be made, in his numerous stories, for whatever has already aged, such as simple travel notes, momentary parodies, polemics on current events. Certain stories which are simply cruel or unusual may be neglected. Even so, enough are left which remain unquestionably superlative: the hallucination of *Vera*, a grandiose fresco like *L'Impatience de la foule*, a delicate analysis of pride and of spirituality like *L'Amour suprême*, a harmonious symbol in *L'Aventure de Tsè-i-la*. Among the perfect masterpieces figure forever the poetic tales in which Villiers has realized the supreme ideal expressed in *La Maison du bonheur:* "Oh! to withdraw into some nuptial abode, to save from the disaster of their days at least one autumn, one delicious snatch of happiness, of adorably faded tints, an embellished melancholy." In this vein no tale surpasses *Akédysséril* where, in a magical setting, amid all the magnificences of pride, glory, beauty and mystery, Villiers sang in an orchestral prose his heart's deepest desire: to transcend life and to be fixed by death in the sublime attitude of love transport.

In every romantic writer there struggles an imprisoned orator. Dramatic form—more exactly, because less strictly, dialogue form—could not fail to attract Villiers. He had attempted it in *La Révolte*, a haughty vindication in exaltation and in tears of the imprescriptible rights of the Dream—a one-act play beside which the whole Ibsenian drama seems insipid. He returned to it in *Le Nouveau Monde*, a quite

special drama because of the very conditions of the competition,[1] in which however several of his favourite themes appear: the "literary conception" of Mistress Andrews' character, the sinisterly fantastic legend of the Evandales, Lord Cecil's eloquent revery in the last act. As early as 1865 the third act of *Elën* had proved what dramatic intensity this Hegelian dreamer could achieve; but everything disappears in the radiance of his supreme creation, the fairy-like *Axël*.

Axël is not only Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's most characteristic and complete work. It is also the last expression of European Romanticism, the Faust of the expiring nineteenth century. However, between Goethe and Villiers, Wagner has intervened. Many a passage in the *Contes* shows how much the great musician's triumph had appealed to Villiers' imagination. Wagner, whose tenacious will had broken down all obstacles and conquered his Beyreuth, represented the artist's revenge on a world hostile to art. The gigantic proportions of the works which provoked the enthusiastic exodus of pilgrims towards his Bavarian shrine, emphasized still further the scope of such a victory. *Axël* keeps a gleam of this inspiration. Axël and Sara, having like the heroes of the *Tetralogy* undergone the ordeal of love and of gold, die, as Tristan and Isolde would die if they dared render eternal their ecstasy in the second act; but in his esoteric masterpiece Villiers is not crushed by this comparison with the master of philter and ring. His work remains intensely personal. The antithesis between Axël who embodies all he loves and Kaspar in whom all he detests lives again, the parallelism confronting the hero and the heroine who renounce, the ineffable serenity of the final scene where the lovers, freed from their corporeal vestments, recover their souls which are but one soul, purified—these motifs of the supreme symphony, a glorification of the Dream to such a degree that the mind is unable to decide whether it be "inhuman or superhuman," have been heard ringing throughout Villiers' work. If at times they seem new, they owe this privilege to the final form in which the poet has clothed them: "On your face, ever pale, shines the reflection of some ancient pride . . . You will be the bitter fiancée of this nuptial eve. . . . The years are breezes and we are the leaves they bear away . . . Cinders, I am the eve of what you are. . . ." Magnificent harmonies communicating to the soul a sacred vibration as intoxicating as Wagner's most perfect pages. We know that Villiers felt doubts as to the ending of *Axël*, fearing it would not satisfy the orthodox mind. Whether or not these conscientious scruples are justified, from the point of view of Art such

[1] *New York Herald* prize contest. *Tr.*

a finale is a worthy crown for the work of him who wrote: "I deign to punish the gulfs—with my wings alone."

3. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL. PAUL BOURGET

Paul Bourget's literary evolution has proceeded with that conscientious regularity which is observed in each of his books. A mind open to multiple influences but preoccupied with order and clearness, his analysis has ever aspired to follow the thoughts of his chosen masters to their last systematic consequences. His work has always, more or less openly, involved a didactic element. His reward was seeing himself considered, at two stages of his development, the guide of a part of French opinion, without even those who refused to follow him ever questioning the honesty of his intention.

Paul Bourget began with several volumes of verse influenced by Musset, Baudelaire and the idea of the English Lake poets current about 1875. Their poetic value is rather slight, their psychological interest very great. Bourget strove to reconcile his admiration for Byron's and Barbey d'Aurevilly's flamboyant style with his personal taste for minute analysis applied to modern life. The titles of the first two volumes—*Au Bord de la mer* and *La Vie inquiète*—sum up fairly well this duality, his desire to discover, beneath the most factitious social life a profound psychological basis—a task of disentanglement for which the poem is ill suited. Thus *Edel* is already a sort of novel. Verse has been for Bourget little more than a means of making clear through rhythmical distinctness his conclusions as to the state of mind of his generation making its start. He pursued this research in the form of critical studies. His *Essais de psychologie contemporaine* inaugurated a series of works of research and of readjustment forming a continuous chain in his total production parallel to that of the novels and the stories. Theoretical discussions and fictions find common ground in the unity of a doctrine which gives this French work the air, familiar to English writers, of a "criticism of life." From his first essays, Bourget establishes his attitude towards the masters of contemporary youth. In studying them he defines himself with the three essential influences which have acted upon him—which have determined, by opposing or uniting, the curve of his development: Baudelaire whose refined disquietude and mystical aspirations he over-emphasizes; Stendhal, the precursor of the most profound psychological analyses; finally Taine, representative of a Positivism fed with facts and ambitious of large constructive syntheses. Bourget will have to deny nothing of this triple education in order to present himself successively as a psychological novelist, a social, Catholic and conservative novelist.

Bourget's first novels show him in search of his personal expression. He chose the novel, as he writes to the subtle Henry James, because this art is "the most modern of all, the most flexible, the most capable of accommodating itself to the various necessities of each human nature," adding that "the laws imposed upon the novelist by the various æsthetic systems reduce themselves finally to one: give a personal impression of Life." *Cruelle Enigme*, however, does not entirely fulfil the object assigned by this preface. In spite of certain delicate shades in the observation, this social psychology lacks originality, seems rather an ingenious exercise than a necessity of the human heart. Likewise *Profils perdus* which represents "the indefinite, that is to say the possible, that is to say the reparation of sad reality," and *Crime d'Amour* and *Mensonges* have given some grounds for the conventional image of a snobbish Bourget, eager first of all to find favour with an elegant public. Against this affectation, *André Cornélis*, "a moral anatomy chart," reacted with an excessive rigour. The affectation of transplanting Hamlet's drama to a contemporary setting in order to study it under a magnifying-glass, with a show of puerile science, gave an arbitrary air to the work which it was easy to laugh at.

From this period of groping Bourget emerged definitely with the first of his big novels, *Le Disciple*. This book has been bitterly discussed, certain of Bourget's present admirers not having been the least ardent in reproaching him with it. It remains representative however —as indispensable as *L'Etape* to the understanding of its author. It commands a crossroads of Bourget's thought, summarizing the ideas which had been preponderant in his mind for twenty years, announcing those which were henceforth to take the ascendancy. The preface has the grave accent of a moralist upon whom rest incalculable responsibilities. It is addressed to the young men born just after the war, whose confidence and love the writer wished to merit. On the threshold of this bold novel which has clumsily been accused of immorality and defiance, Bourget exhorts his young brother to seriousness and idealism. He denounces, on the same ground of national perils, universal suffrage, the "struggle for life" and delicate nihilism—a rather confused sermon by an orator animated with a sincere goodwill, who does not however always distinguish between the essential realities and the transient manifestations magnified by his analysis. It is important to stress this profession of faith which permits us to see fully the absolute honesty which is Bourget's highest characteristic, and also his tendency to build upon fragile foundations—upon artificial juxtapositions—the edifice in which he will enclose a man, a whole society even.

The story confirms this impression of uneasiness. The two principal

WOOLWICH PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

figures—that of the modern philosopher, Adrien Sixte (who is a novelized Taine), and of his disciple, Robert Grelou, are studied with an abundance and a perseverance heavy at times but in the long run powerful and effective, with this reserve that the reader cannot make out whether these persons live by their own will or by the obstinate will of the writer. It is the same with the very exceptional psychological conflict which makes one doubt whether it presents the crucial significance attributed to it by the author. The work lacks balance. Bourget's indulgence for the aristocratic circles he describes renders a trifle insipid the counter-revolutionary theories which he borrowed from Taine and which are not at all improved by being despoiled of the combative life given them by the atmosphere of the *Ancien Régime*. In his distortion of the principles of the modern Spinoza, the "disciple" shows himself either too ingenious or too simple to satisfy anyone, whether the partisans or the adversaries of the philosopher. *Le Disciple* already manifests the co-existence in Bourget of a sympathetic effort loyally to apprehend the thought of his contradictors and of a fundamental incapacity to succeed totally.

Le Disciple ends on an appeal which, beneath its hypothetical appearance, already affirms a faith: "You would not seek me had you not found me." Bourget cites Pascal's phrase which he declares admirable and which is doubly so since it explains at one and the same time that, to those who are already convinced, everything is ground for conviction and that those who have not yet found anything do not set out to seek it. He himself frightened at the possible consequences of the Positivism he had described—and partly imagined—sees sure help only in return to the Christian religion which he already associates with the ideas of order and hierarchy. Soon, with *Cosmopolis*, he seemed to return to his first novels of worldly psychology. It was in appearance only. In his mind continued the work which was to conduct him to the doctrinairism of *L'Etape*. For if the clearness of the exposition forces us to distinguish in time, two Bourgets, there has really been, in living duration, but a single thought evolving towards its appointed abode.

4. MAURICE BARRÈS AND *LE CULTE DU MOI*

"I owe everything to that superior logic of a tree seeking the light and yielding with perfect sincerity to its inner necessity." Thus did Barrès proudly decline the praises of those who congratulated the author of *Le Culte du Moi* on having evolved into the author of *Le Roman de l'Energie nationale*. Nevertheless, in the work of self-examination to which he had submitted himself, Barrès, still replying

to René Doumic, distinguished two moments: "Having thought out at great length the idea of the 'ego,' with no other method than that of the poets and mystics, I descended among shifting sands till I found at the bottom collectivity as a support." If it be added that this search coincided with a crisis of the French conscience which precipitated at least the explicit assertion of the second truth discovered by Barrès, one will have the right to study successively in him, according to the order in which they were revealed, the individualist and the nationalist.

"I have never written but one book, *Un Homme libre;* and, at the age of twenty-four, I indicated in it all I have since developed."

Barrès took over from it ideas already expressed, since *Un Homme libre* is the second of the impassioned ideologies composing the trilogy *Le Culte du Moi.* This ambiguous title has won the writer adhesions, attacks and parodies often unjustified formally, yet almost always significant, for they reflected the instinctive reactions of a human conscience confronted with another conscience intimately unveiled. Resolutely egoistical, Maurice Barrès knew the proud satisfaction of being worshipped or hated without rational reason, according to the attraction or the irritation which his idealized confessions have aroused in each reader. Yet these books of the first Barrès reserve the keenest enjoyment for those who approach them in the same spirit, without concealing anything of their pride and without underestimating their own capacity for comprehension.

Sous l'œil des Barbares relates the violent birth of a personality: "The whole book is Philippe's struggle to maintain himself among the barbarians who wish to bend him to their image." The ego is the one reality, since it creates the universe. Whosoever opposes the free growth of a being is unpardonable. To the ego which seeks itself all weapons are permitted, scorn being the most effective. Is this the assertion of an unrestrained individualism? No, for this right really to live involves a sacred duty. There is an imperious necessity to find oneself. The generation of which Barrès was the spokesman rebels against the pseudo-scientific idea that thinking can be done wholesale and collectively. Each must show himself irreducible to the rest. The hero of *Sous l'œil des Barbares* does not yet succeed in reconciling action, his desire for ideology and his taste for "feeling the pulse of the emotions." His individualism has no intention of being anarchy. He aims at Goethe's serenity. He rarely attains these heights. He weakens, loses his footing, acknowledges his fatigue, his fear. At times he seems about to founder in that dilettante nihilism, probably the one temptation which seriously threatened Barrès' thought. He capitulates in silence: "Would our words, which are imprints of

efforts, evoke the furtive felicity of this soul in dissolution, happy because it feels as little as possible only?"

This was but coquetry. Barrès always felt sufficiently sure of his power to appreciate the charm of evoking in his work the lives which disintegrate—the persistent trait of an unfalteringly curious intelligence spurring on a somewhat limited sensibility. Barrès strove, in each of his epochs, to keep the balance between what he owed his inflexible doctrine and what he owed the flexibility of life. In 1904, adding a preface to his *Homme libre*, he judged it thus: "I have sinned against my thought through excess of scruple. I feared to introduce my didacticism to supplement the facts. In 1890, I felt my abundance, I did not possess myself as an intelligible, limited being" —declarations which are contradictory in appearance only, didacticism being with him a spontaneous movement, the true sensibility of this intelligence. *L'Homme libre* maintains the ground conquered: "It is by loving myself infinitely, it is by embracing myself that I shall embrace things and rebuild them according to my dream." The free man has defined his aim: "To feel the most possible." He will reach it by a discipline. He seeks this discipline in spiritual retreats, in meditations—real exercises of intellectual asceticism in which he is sustained by his intercessors: Loyola, the master psychologist; Constant, "dilettante and fanatic"; the Sainte-Beuve of *Volupté*. He wants to understand Lorraine and feel Venice which will, one after the other, yield him the keys of his "ego" to which he lays siege.

In his certainty of victory he accords himself the vacation of a feigned dispersion. In reality he touches nothing which does not bring him back to the conquest of his egoism. By comparing himself with his different masters, from Disraeli to Renan, he fortifies himself. He grows with all the results obtained by his friends—Guaïta's mysticism, Jules Tellier's eloquence, Bourget's analyses. "A force had amassed itself in me," he says on the threshold of *Le Jardin de Bérénice*, "of which I knew only the discomfort it caused"—an uneasiness announcing a liberation near at hand. Philippe expends this force in political activity tinged with idealism and melancholy sensuality. He accords himself another retreat in Aigues-Mortes, a town chosen for "its consonance with an incomparable desolation." There, at the top of the Constance tower, between Bérénice, tender, fragile dreamer, and his electoral rival, the sectarian and specialist Adversary, he recovers, in its distinctness, "the idea of tradition, of unity in succession." "Bérénice's pedagogy" leads him definitively to refined pity. His contact with the people helps him to take the last step and reveals him humanity. The voyage of exploration is over. Seneca the egoist, despite

all his sympathy for Lazarus the fanatic, chooses to serve mankind and himself in the refuge his comfortable income affords him while awaiting "the organization of something analogous to the religious orders which, born spontaneously of the same oppression we have described in *Sous l'œil des Barbares*, were the place where the practical rules for becoming *Un Homme libre* were formerly elaborated, and where took shape that admirable vision of the divine in the world which, under the more modern name of unconsciousness, Philippe recovered in *Le Jardin de Bérénice*."

L'Ennemi des lois sums up these experiences in the form "of a sentimental note-book, not of a manual." If at times it seems to indicate a step backwards, it is because Barrès goes over the entire ground anew. The progress here realized is above all of a literary order. The autobiography no longer stifles the fiction. With all its harshness of style and its digressions, *L'Ennemi des lois* is already a novel. Even if one prefers the elusive Bérénice, one will recognize that Marina and Claire are no longer mere feminine pictures of their author. Furthermore, events have forced the Boulangist *député* to enlarge his inquiry. Cleverly connecting his narrative with Bourget's *Disciple*, he attempts an ample synthesis of the youth of the day. He questions the masters of sociology. He assimilates the artistic dreams of Wagner and Louis II. He begins his flirtation with Catholicism—a voluptuous, deferential attitude, without submission, which it pleases him to adopt because it bears witness to his self-command. Above all he develops with precision his form as a writer. He creates the Barrès style.

Nothing is more awkward to define than this style, if one attempts to study it in the abstract. Nothing is more revealing of the man in his work. It reflects this paradox of a writer for whom the idea is an excitant to feeling and for whom the sensation is fully enjoyed only with the aid of the intelligence, so that its reaction is complete only if it be double. In the passages where the concord is not accomplished, Barrès' phrase retains a dryness which has repelled many readers and which he endeavours in vain to mask beneath an air of proud irony or of impertinent triviality. Imagination is the domain in which his intellectual sensibility and his sensitive intelligence are best reconciled. He excels in prolonging. In a Saint-Simon he appreciates "not so much the quality of the reasoning as the richness of the reveries." Ill at ease in the representation of pure ideas or of simple movements of the heart, he triumphs in the arbitrary, in a picture of inhuman fantasy like that which terminates *L'Ennemi des lois:* "For Marina, Claire and André other egos exist in the same degree as theirs, so that the conditions of

the happiness of others combine with the conditions of their own. They do not destroy the flowers they like to smell. The fact they suffered would diminish their own pleasure. Their refined sensibility suppresses all immorality."

This ease, this extreme delicacy are the qualities he keeps in the portrayal of sensuality. He detests Naturalism of which he has said: "Coarseness was mistaken for power, obscenity for passion and pictures in false perspective for pages 'teeming with life.'" Nothing is more opposed to the Stendhalian tone spontaneous with him concerning things of the flesh. He likes a woman to be a lovely prey and complacently describes the magnificent exotics, like Princess Marina, who, yielding to the desires of the senses, offer a fabulous booty to the imagination. Pride, and Romanticism as well. Beyond Stendhal an echo of Chateaubriand, of the great *désenchanté*, completes the sentence of detached analysis in veiled poetry: "In the libertine tone of the narrative he discovered the flavours of passionate melancholy."

Dealing with human characters, always resistant and limited, this romanticism is restrained. In the presence of landscapes it spreads out more freely. *Du Sang, de la Volupté et de la Mort* is the first of those travel narratives in which Barrès yields himself more completely in taking possession of a place. Already he shows himself master of that personal music whose accents will be found again in the books of his maturity—a brief antithetical sentence with an unforgettably authoritative ending: "[Toledo] is not so much of a town, a noisy thing subdued to the commodities of life, as a place significant for the soul" —a long sentence proudly unfurled which dies away in muffled sonorities: "For him who possesses the secret of making objects talk, Paris, stamped with the imperial seal of Balzac, gives lessons of will; but Parma, so impregnated with Stendhal, is the place to abandon oneself to the worship of soul sensations"—magic cadences by which it would be as dangerous to allow oneself to be charmed unwarily as it would have been puerile to be discouraged by the didactic severity of *L'Homme libre*. Barrès, who prepares *Les Déracinés* in which his dogmatism will be stated, will rightly deny the charge of having changed: "I did not hasten," he says, "to uphold the altars I had shaken but to uphold the altars forming the pedestal of this ego to which I had rendered a preliminary and necessary worship." To the very stronghold of the royal emotions his intelligence accords his artistic sensibility, Barrès displays magnificently his Romantic incapacity to escape from egoism and revives with a delicate hand the subtle pleasures of a voluptuous melancholy. Amid fluctuations the importance of which current events risk exaggerating for us,

there was indeed but one Barrès, just as there is but one Bourget; but perhaps it is fitting to see the finished picture of Bourget in *Le Démon de Midi* which dates from 1914 and that of Barrès in the mixture of harsh will and elusive irony which, as early as 1891, makes *Le Jardin de Bérénice* a precious breviary of Barrèsism.

5. ANATOLE FRANCE AND INTELLECTUAL FANTASY

Anatole France had published historical and critical studies, volumes of poems and of stories when, in 1881, *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard* made him famous. His period of apprenticeship was over, he had a "manner." From his scholarly researches he retained the taste for absolute precision which excluded the approximation, the semi-accuracy. *Jocaste et le Chat maigre* already bore witness to his concern for a story-telling art which conceals the art under an unruffled simplicity. *Les Noces Corinthiennes,* which recalls—beyond Leconte de Lisle—Chénier's Greece, showed, in a limpid form, the play of that characteristic curiosity seduced by the beauty of dying Paganism as well as by the fervour of young Christianity. Equally distant from Romanticism and Naturalism, Anatole France thus embodied the most delicate culture of European humanism.

In *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard* and in *Le Livre de mon Ami,* he appeared with a smiling good humour heightened, under an archaic politeness, by an alert love of mischief. Behind the universally welcoming curiosity, behind the amused acceptance of his own humble life which he lent Pierre Nozière, it was easy to discern a refined coquetry with regard to all the riches of life dominated by the sovereignty of an infallible taste. He waked half-real figures and took pleasure in leading them through long, sinuous conversations nourished with all the classical cultures, passing by imperceptible meanders from the gravest to the most futile subjects where mourning wore a rose, where jesting ended in quiet emotion. It was a perpetual enchantment. He smiled with an indulgence which Renan had known only at the close of a long struggle, at the price of a sceptical and disillusionized fatigue. He narrated with the ease of a Voltaire, freed from every polemic, having blunted his mocking dart. His sobriety did not exclude fancy. He desired his tapestry, with its exquisitely antiquated colouring, to be enlivened by some bright spots. He took up arms in defence of fairy-tales. He appealed to the imagination: "It is imagination, with its falsehoods, which is the sower of all beauty and of all virtue in the world. Through it alone we are great." Endowed with intellectual curiosity, accomplished grace of expression, who better than he could sum up this philosophy?—"I have been inclined at all times to take life

as a spectacle. I have never been a true observer. For observation needs a system to direct it, and I have no system. The observer guides his glance. The spectator allows himself to be snared by his eyes. I was born a spectator and I shall keep, I believe, all my life, this ingenuousness of the great city's idlers who are amused by everything and who retain, in the age of ambition, the disinterested curiosity of little children."

"I have no system." This he proved in *Thaïs* by evoking them all. Not indeed in the hallucinatory form of *La Tentation de Saint-Antoine*, in an epic nightmare procession, but in the seductive setting of supreme Alexandrianism which allows him to present on the same plane truths with a parodoxical air and paradoxes which are perhaps truths. The exigencies of his pious undertaking bring the unfortunate Paphnuce into a series of conflicts with the ascetic Timocles, with Nicias the sceptic, with Dorion the Epicurean, with Eucrites the Stoic, with Marcus the Arian, with Cotta's Roman sound sense, with the thousand temptations of the Evil One and with the injustice of Divine Grace. For, if certain pages of *Thaïs* already foreshadow *Le Jardin d'Epicure*, the narrative sums up, under its nonchalant air, Voltaire's and Renan's criticism of Christianity. With a delicate finger, France underscores the relativity of dogmas and the strange mystical inversions which ensure eternal bliss for the courtesan and damnation for the monk guilty of too charitable a zeal. He is visibly amused by this spiritual puss-in-the-corner in which he who starts from divine love gets caught in the quicksands of human love, while his purified sister travels the opposite path. The psychologist enjoys watching terror shrivel Thaïs's superstitious little soul and jealousy of Nicias corrupt Paphnuce's mind. He takes pleasure in demonstrating, step by step, the construction of a legend. Never did a work of art supported by so much erudition assume more simply the aspect of a pastime. Everything in it seems natural, even the classic perfection of the slightest details of its narrative: "When night fell, the murmur of the tamarisks, caressed by the breeze, made him shiver, and he drew his hood down over his eyes no longer to see the beauty of things. . . . He exposed the loosened fibres to the sun and to the dew, and every morning was careful to turn them over to keep them from rotting; and he rejoiced to feel the simplicity of childhood born in him anew"—complete mastery of the sentence, sensitive to the most delicate insinuations of a subtle irony, through which this pellucid work keeps at the same time all the prestige of caprice.

After this imagination of the antique world, France felt sure enough of his power to imagine the modern world—modern, yet not contem-

porary. *La Rotisserie de la Reine Pédauque* is doubtless, in the general estimation, Anatole France's masterpiece—the one which all his admirers salute unanimously. Everyone who, at the various stages of his long and glorious career, has addressed him as *Mon bon Maître,* loves this book of mystification and observation in which the pastiche, archaism, evocation of the most absurd legends (so like our superstitions, adds the humorist) veil an eternally human satire beneath the charm of an Arabian Nights' Entertainment. In a fanciful eighteenth-century setting, through scenes of homely reality, through discussions of life and the art of living, the narrative flows on, as if drifting idly, but guided by a firm hand sure of its goal. The characters start up like the actors in an ideal Punch and Judy show. Here is Tournebroche, the delightful simpleton, his father Léonard and his mother Barbe, "the saintly and worthy woman"; then brother Ange, the gluttonous and rascally friar, d'Astarac the cabalist, Mosaïde the interpreter of the Book of Enoch, the gallant M. d'Anquetil, and the retainer de la Guéritaude, not to mention Catherine the lace-maker and the wily Jahel who sow comedies and dramas as they pass because, in the heart of man, God has placed desire. In the centre of this world is Abbé Jérôme Coignard, a real eighteenth-century abbé, drunkard and rake, indulgent for all human weaknesses, deriving virtuous lessons from his own lapses in gambling and love, a humanist with a touch of smiling pedantry, maliciously ingenuous, dominating all the vicissitudes of fate thanks to a serene wisdom in which clear vision mingles with ironic pity. A fictitious biography whose relief discourages the novelist and the historian equally, it fully deserves the tribute France himself jestingly bestowed upon it: "It is a work which makes one think of those portraits of Erasmus, painted by Holbein, which are seen at the Louvre, in the museum at Basle and at Hampton Court, and the delicacy of which one never tires of tasting."

In the preface to *Les Opinions de M. Jérôme Coignard* where, with a modest coquetry, he thus defined his work, Anatole France analysed this hero to whom he had given much of his own wit. He spoke of "his indulgent wisdom," fruit "of a sort of generous scepticism." Philosopher and Christian, he assigned him two masters: Epicurus to whom Coignard owed the liberation of his thought and Saint Francis of Assisi who had taught him simplicity of soul and of bearing; but this description which is perfect for the Coignard of the *Rotisserie* in his fresh novelty, applies less well to the Coignard of the *Opinions* whose disquisitions pitilessly sap the society they pretend to explain. Already, in the form, the classification of these opinions under abstract heads shows a change. Assuredly the art remains infinite. Coignard

moves in a chosen, elegantly superannuated setting, and his creator often takes pains to develop his thought until it becomes a paradox so as to lessen its aggressive import. The reader nevertheless feels the hardening and half perceives a bitterness. France, in 1893, was torn by violent political passions. Could the writer refuse the pseudonym he had selected the perilous honour of taking sides? The Tourangeau Rabelais and the Parisian Villon who figure among Anatole France's most authentic masters had been unable to spend all their lives laughing at the human comedy, and their jests had sharpened into satires. Had not France himself, in the flexible criticism of *La Vie littéraire*, been forced to affirm affections and repugnances? It was natural that Jérôme Coignard's critical philosophy should declare the ridiculous uselessness of human institutions as he passed them in review. Examples drawn from antiquity, commentaries on eighteenth-century events awoke contemporary allusions at every step. Sometimes even, there was need of an editor's note which, under colour of explanation, accentuated the comparison. From this raillery emerged a positive conclusion: a stern, vigilant struggle against all the fanaticisms of which human law and justice still bears too undeniable traces. France perfectly understood that this attitude was not definitive, that it exposed his hero to a double reproach. If, in the preface to *Les Opinions*, he opposes to the unleashed parties the "charitable scepticism" of Abbé Coignard, the last page of the book also affirms that to destroy is insufficient, that the necessity of creating—through the imagination—cannot be avoided. "To serve men, one must cast aside every reason, as an encumbering baggage, and rise on the wings of enthusiasm. If one reasons, one will never fly." Jérôme Coignard's last words presage the disenchanted spirit of M. Bergeret and, this crisis once passed, Anatole France's profession of faith in "*des temps meilleurs*."

Le Lys rouge is Anatole France's one attempt in the sentimental novel form; and its originality does not reside in the plot—the story of the first two lovers of Mme. Martin-Bellème whom the author leaves young enough discreetly to permit her other experiences. The interest of *Le Lys rouge* lies in the description of the setting—picturesque corners of Paris and Florence—and of the episodic characters—epigrammatic critic, decadent poetess, dubious Italian prince, among whom passes the delicious Verlainian Choulette. Its weakness is the inadequacy of the protagonists, Le Ménil and Deschartre remaining rather conventional and Thérèse adding little but the charm of her white arms to the refined phrases Anatole France has deigned to put in her mouth. An anthology might be composed of quotations

from *Le Lys rouge*, a kind of melancholy garland for some statue to sensual love: "We wish to be loved and, when we are loved, we are tormented and bored . . . A woman is frank when she does not tell useless lies . . . We were already so old when we were born . . . Every human creature is a different being in the eyes of each of those who look at him. In this sense it may be said that the same woman has never belonged to two men . . . We are broken against each other, we do not mingle!" An impression of irremediable failure fills the book, sadder than any lyrical revolt. "Give men as witnesses and as judges Irony and Pity." The France of *Le Lys rouge* repeats to his contemporaries the advice he had given them in *Le Jardin d'Epicure*. By this he does not mean the combative irony of Barbey or the abstract irony of Barrès or the avenging irony of Villiers, but a humanist's irony, "gentle and kind," in short the irony of an ideal Attica, goddess of tender reason whose praise he repeats with the restrained sadness of the philosopher about to leave this shelter of wisdom and plunge back into human life.

6. PIERRE LOTI AND EXOTICISM

"Nothing has happened to me that I did not obscurely foresee from my earliest boyhood," writes Pierre Loti at the beginning of *Le Pélerin d'Angkor*. When but a child, in his little museum in the Saintonge, he had foreseen that, in spite of his family's opposition, he would enter the navy and visit the most beautiful countries in the world. He had also foreseen that his Protestant faith would gradually give way to a kind of vague pantheism dominated by the terror of death. If he omits to add that he had foreseen his literary work, it is simply because this was for him but an episode—another effort to save his life from the engulfing nothingness.

It is this personal sentiment which inspires his books—much more than the circumstances which determined their composition. They are linked together by a bond of unity beside which their superficial differences are of no account. Much has been said about Loti's disillusionment; and on this score he has been compared with Chateaubriand—a resemblance in the attitude which should not blind us to the fundamental difference. Chauteaubriand had proudly "yawned away his life" because his work did not receive the recognition he believed it deserved. Loti obtained all the successes he coveted. The earth satisfied his curiosity and his sensuality to the full. He knew the joy of discovering closed countries, of revealing them to men. He experienced the more refined pleasure of seeing their charm diminished by

civilization, of having been the last person to enjoy their virgin beauty. He lacked nothing, not even the melancholy pleasure of prophesying the inevitable decadence:

"A time will come when the world will be a very dull place to dwell in, when everything will have been made uniform from one end to the other and when it will no longer be possible even to try to travel for a little distraction . . ."

Yet all these distractions which were offered him were unable to distract him from the enemy he carried within himself. The obsession of the relentless unfolding of life with the inevitable old age and death at the end of everything—that bitter knowledge which with him is as acute as a physical sensation—pursues Loti even in the intoxication of love and the contemplation of the most sumptuous landscapes. "Before my fortieth year," he wrote, "I am reduced to singing my ill and announcing it to the casual passer-by, to appeal for the sympathy of the remotest strangers; and to appeal with an anguish which increases as I become more conscious of the final dust. And who knows? As I journey farther in life, I shall perhaps come to writing of yet more intimate things which at present could not be wrung from me—and this to try to prolong, beyond my own span, all I have been, all I have wept, all I have loved." From *Le Roman d'un enfant* to *Prime Jeunesse*, what confessions has not Loti painfully accepted in order to ensure, in the memory of his readers, some years of life, first for what he deemed best among his memories, then little by little, shyly, for his whole self?

Criticism does not abdicate its judgment when it decides in his favour and agrees that indeed he never did anything else; but this character of jetsam saved from the universal shipwreck is true above all of the works which are properly autobiographic. In the novels, art intervenes. Loti tries, at any rate, to escape from himself. Doubtless this escape should not be exaggerated. The characters he chooses are generally simple. No psychological delicacy is required for the portrayal of Ramuntcho or "*mon frère Yves.*" The distance envelops Rarahu and Madame Chrysanthème in a magnificent setting which easily stands them in stead of a soul. The apparent complexity of *Les Désenchantées* is an Occidental culture which adds itself to their passionate sensibility without as yet penetrating it profoundly. Even in *Pêcheur d'Islande*, the book by Loti which comes closest to the conventional novel, one would say that the heroes were abstract general types, did not Loti possess a visual imagination absolutely rebellious to all abstraction. For the feasts of eyesight and the short halts of sensual passion alone procured him exalted moments when, lost in the

present sensation, he forgot the menace of the other, final annihilation.

Loti's exoticism is then no artist's whim but a necessity for the man he was, the one balm for his boredom and his fear. Now, as a rather natural consequence, exoticism has also been responsible for his greatest literary successes. Though incapable of a personal intellectual construction, he sees at a glance the whole of a landscape, and his descriptions, espousing the contours of his object with marvellous suppleness, give a picture of it so faithful as to restore for the dullest eyes the entire spectacle with the inner harmony justifying its existence. An example will illustrate this recreative passivity of Loti as a painter: "However the moon sinks slowly, and its blue light grows dim. Now it is nearer the waters and draws across them a long trailing gleam. It becomes yellower, giving but little light, like a dying lamp. Slowly it begins to grow bigger and bigger, enormous, and then it becomes red, loses its shape, sinks, strange, terrifying. One no longer knows what one sees. On the horizon it is a great, dull, bloody fire. It is too big to be the moon . . ."

"The notion of the real is lost," he writes a little farther on. He is at once alarmed and delighted by it. Not that he is incapable of precise descriptions. They abound in *Au Maroc* or in *Vers Ispahan.* Not that he is incapable even of the rigorous minuteness indispensable to the crusade of virulent satire which he undertook in *L'Inde* (*sans les Anglais*) and *La Mort de Philæ;* but his favourite method, his most instinctive tendency, consists in losing himself in the spectacle he contemplates until he is enveloped by it, in no longer painting it otherwise than as filled with their two mingled emotions. This sentence: "Slowly it begins to grow bigger and bigger, enormous, then it becomes red, loses its shape, sinks, strange, terrifying," sums up Loti's whole style. Repetition of words, an accumulation of descriptive verbs, adjectives of subjective impression—everything converges to create an atmosphere of indefinable mystery. Thus it excels in evoking the vague, in presenting one reality by the negation of another: "It was a pale, pale light, unlike anything. It trailed over things like reflections of dead sunlight. About them, suddenly, sprang up an immense void, which was of no colour; and, except for the boards of their boat, everything seemed diaphanous, impalpable, chimerical."

There is the secret of his power over the imagination. He paints things in a waking dream wherein they arise and disappear magically. He describes while seeming to capitulate to reality. In the sorcery of this prose the most abstract terms shed their intellectual value and cease to act save by virtue of their affective force: "That

night was immensity presented under its most astonishingly simple aspects, in neutral tints, giving impressions of depth alone. This horizon, which indicated no precise region of the earth, not even any geological era, must have been so often the same, from the beginning of time, that looking at it one really seemed to see nothing —nothing but the eternity of things which are and cannot help being." "To be" and "to seem"—these rudimentary verbs recur continually in Loti's books—symbolically. For, though weak for precise description, they are unequalled in their infinite aptitude for suggestion. Now suggestion is indeed the one aim of this art which, exasperated by the omnipresence of mortal danger, scarcely dares assert its supreme hope: "I am more and more inclined to believe in and to hold out my arms to sovereign Pity, because I have suffered too much, under every sky, amid enchantment and horror, have seen too much suffering, seen too much weeping, and seen too much praying"; and this persistent evocation of so many skies, so many charms or horrors, was for Loti, all told, but a sort of opiate to soothe human suffering and for an instant to dilute his own anguish in dream.

7. THE ROMANTIC AND REGIONALISTIC NOVEL

Even at the height of their success, the Naturalists had not succeeded in touching that part of the literary public which demands of the novelist a romantic plot satisfying their imagination, a story transporting them far from everyday reality. These reread George Sand, enjoying the gentle romanticism of *Le Marquis de Villemer*. They welcomed the last productions of Octave Feuillet, a painter delicate and without breadth of rather monotonous aristocratic circles. They remained faithful to Victor Cherbuliez whose novels, from *L'Aventure de Ladislas Bolski* to *La Vocation du comte Ghislain*, kept, in their alternation of romantic incidents and brilliant conversations, the charm of an About who, even on the Boulevard, did not forget Geneva. These readers appreciated in *La Maison des deux Barbeaux* the honourable qualities of André Theuriet. For want of better they accepted Coppée's stories until the time when *Le Coupable* showed them how a Parnassian poet could equal that Georges Ohnet whom Jules Lemaître had taught them, if not to shun, at least to repudiate.

However, in the movement of anti-Naturalistic reaction, there was room for a renaissance of the literary romantic novel. One man understood it and exactly defined the end this art should attain: "May you find, in the pages you are going to reread, a little of that

sentimental grace, of that romantic side of the real, where for you, as for me, lies the principal merit, the most agreeable charm of works of imagination."

It was in these terms that Marcel Prévost dedicated his *Automne d'un femme* to a friend; and he himself seemed, by his scientific antecedents, particularly qualified to undertake with originality this rehabilitation of the romantic in the real. It is all the more regrettable to find in his novels no other trace of the scientific spirit than minute calculations culminating in this title, *Les Demi-Vierges*, and an annoying skill in exploiting industrially the methods which had once succeeded.

Marcel Prévost's originality lies in the task he has assumed of taking the edge off romantic illusions for inquisitive boys and anxious girls. Brazenly, under the mask of a lover making his confession, in imitations of women's letters fabricated expressly, and reading like it, he has pretended to initiate them to a modern conventional life which carefully excludes all grandeur even in sensuality. It is a work which might have been exquisitely perverse had not the grace of the libertine story-tellers been replaced by a style which fluctuates between the sickening commonplaceness of the society column and the stiff gravity of a psychological Prudhomme—which might have been dangerously perverse but which an ingenuous impotence to endow theoretical vice with a single new refinement renders sadly inoffensive. Now this picture of a factitious society which knows neither the subtleties of intelligence nor the ardours of passion nor the profound stirrings of sensual love, is dominated by the image of an indulgent God who forgives everything, even the most hardened sinner against the spirit. In Him is embodied the thought of Marcel Prévost who emerged from his confessional furnished like a boudoir, about the time of the *Exposition Universelle*, to participate to the best of his ability in the revival of French energies. Then he climbed into the pulpit, astonished at the bad reputation enjoyed by France abroad, and decreed himself moralist and preacher for ladies of all classes. To affirm the double failure of his career is then to show oneself less cruel towards him than he himself was towards the vice and the virtue of which he has drawn two such heavily damning portraits.

For the regionalistic novel also George Sand had conquered a patent of nobility in the literature of the nineteenth century, and the *Dominique* which is dedicated to her did indeed keep something of the charm common to this sort of writing; but what in Sand and in Fromentin was but one aspect of a multiple creation became for others the unique aim of their art. They attached themselves to a province, the prin-

cipal character in all their works. Now, as the regionalistic novel has produced in France no work comparable in scope to Thomas Hardy's Wessex series, the public accustomed itself to hooking to the name of each regionalist the name of the country or the title of the book in which he had best described this corner and to feel it had done him full justice.

Perhaps, indeed, sufficient justice has been done Cladel and Theuriet when it is said that the one describes Quercy, the other the Barrois, just as these words, "the author of *Les Antibel* and of *Terre d'Oc*," dispenses with any commentary on Pouvillon. *Jacquou le Croquant* merits more than a simple mention. Observation of the peculiarities of peasant life in Périgord there combines with a psychological and historical study of the last Jacquerie which brought Eugène Le Roy an unqualified success. In the same connection must be recalled the Alsatian novels due to the collaboration of Erckmann and Chatrian which fed the imagination of French schoolchildren until they were dispossessed in favour of the novels of scientific imagination of which Jules Verne, the forerunner of H. G. Wells, remains the undisputed master.

Ferdinand Fabre belongs to the regionalistic group through his attachment to the Cevennes; but he was at the same time one of the best painters of ecclesiastical life. Those interested have exercised their right in incriminating the fidelity of his portraits; but it would be difficult to deny their living interest. Fabre will survive through at least one of his novels, *L'Abbé Tigrane*, a study of ambition in a priest, the analysis of the soul of a modern Lucifer. Traces of Romanticism, even of lyrical improbabilities, have been pointed out in it—excesses hardly compatible with the modern setting of the action; but this action develops with fierce violence, this soul is possessed with a sinister ardour of revolt which, higher than the emotion, force from the reader a kind of religious admiration.

8. THE MORAL AND SOCIAL NOVEL

Yet another set of influences acted upon the French novel at this epoch, to divert it from the Naturalistic paths. The university philosophy, after 1870, had gradually come clear of Cousin's eclecticism and now professed a Neo-Kantian doctrine. The first chapter of *Les Déracinés* recalls the teaching in the lycées of 1880. One-sided teaching surely; but how, were it not partial, would teaching furnish hesitant minds directions and original minds a worthy motive for reaction? The masters of 1880 had been fed on Kant and were beginning to translate Schopenhauer. They orientated their disciples towards ethical problems. In 1883, Fouillée published the

Critique des systèmes de morale contemporains. In 1884 appeared Secrétan's *Principes de la morale* and the *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction* by Guyau, also preoccupied with questions of æsthetics. At the same time, with the consolidation of the political régime and the end of the heroic period of the Republic, social problems became more insistent. The ground seemed prepared for the flowering of a crop of moral and social novels.

Nevertheless no original revelation occurred, because this aspiration, scarcely formulated, was at once satisfied by the discovery of the Russian novels. Here again dates are significant. From 1884 to 1888, translations permitted the French public to read *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Moussorgsky had just forever liberated our Claude Debussy from the Wagnerian subjection. Likewise Tolstoi's and Dostoïevsky's genius manifested the existence of a complex, barbaric art so intensely human that all other models seemed faded and superficial. Fictional literature did not find its Debussy, only adapters or imitators to mutilate clumsily the immense Slav frescoes. E. M. de Voguë won the esteem of the world of letters for his study of the Russian novel rather than for the value of his own works, *Jean d'Agrève* and *Les Morts qui parlent*. Neo-Christian sentiments were strengthened by the Russian contribution. Their influence provoked great works only some years later when from the books of Dostoïevsky and Tolstoï had sprung a new, mystical conception of humanity, of suffering and of pity.

Edouard Rod continues the tradition of Protestant Switzerland which adds habits of moral rigidity and of European curiosity to French culture. Rod is openly a moralist. Whether the cover of his book bears the title *La Course à la mort*, *Le Sens de la vie* or *Les Idées morales du temps présent*, with different means he pursues the same end: to define more exactly the duties of a contemporary conscience towards itself. When he studies Rousseau and Goethe he demands of them further lights for this task. Thus it is not astonishing if we discern in Rod the evident traces of so considerable a preliminary labour. One would wish at times that his application in treating a moral problem might relax and admit the collaboration of a fancy which would perhaps, in the last analysis, be truer to human nature—which would, at any rate, reserve for the reader the surprises of a more refined emotion; but these regrets do not prevent *La Vie privée de Michel Teissier* from holding an honourable place in the history of the moral novel.

We should be courting certain failure were we to apply to Jules

Vallès the ordinary standards of literary criticism; and yet no social novel has surpassed the poignant intensity of the Jacques Vingtras trilogy. Too autobiographical to be classed among the descriptive novelists, too partial to stand among the historians, Vallès revives his epoch with an impetuous power which does not let itself become mere pamphleteering raciness. When he tries to be objective, whether in painting the refractory, the Parisian "irregulars," the victims of hack literature or the "horror and desolation" of London streets with the inhuman hospitality of the workhouse, interest flags; but whoever reads the symphony of revolt formed by *L'Enfant*, *Le Bachelier*, *L'Insurgé*, has, in this confession, the same feeling of freedom as in an imaginative creation. What does it matter that the novelist has taken his own life for raw material, if he has succeeded, intentionally or not, in transmuting it into a work of art?

Of an art less revolutionary, perhaps, than Vallès would have wished to make us believe. "I have made my style out of scraps and pieces," he writes, "which one would think had been picked up with a rag-hook, in unclean, heart-rending corners." In literature too he valued his reputation as a rebel and declared he would be more readily forgiven for having been a member of the Commune than for having sent Homer back to the Blind Hospital. One might smile at his pretensions and amuse oneself picking out the passages where he plunges into slang to escape his classical memories, were it not understood that he himself is not taken in, that he seeks less here to glory in an originality than to dress one of the most cruel wounds to his pride. For the whole of his work is swayed by a twofold hatred. He detests society, "the slut" who "starves men of culture and courage when they refuse to be its lackeys," who tramples the rights of man underfoot; but he curses even more the false education which does not respect the rights of the child, which prevents him from becoming an honest workman to turn him into a useless, starving bachelor of arts. His work is the explosion of his wraths, a vengeance. Everything, even his writer's craft, infuriates him when it diverts him from his essential goal: "They have imagined a Bohemia of cowards. I will show them another, of desperate, menacing men!"

Within the limits where he fiercely confined himself he succeeded. His picture is prodigiously alive. Not that he ever describes. Even when he relates historical events—December 2 or the Commune—he paints less by an evocation of images than by a hallucinated confession of exalted sentiments. His moral condition is insurrection. Hence his loud, savage outcries, such as this commentary on harmless Béranger's "beggars are happy folk!": "That must not be said to the

beggars! If they believe it they will not rebel. They will take up the staff and scrip, not the rifle!" Hence that feverish harshness stigmatizing the Vingtras' failures in his struggle against poverty. Hence too certain paroxysms of inhumanity and "the fine cruelty" of his duel with Legrand. Hence finally the epic character of the narrative when, by lecture, by article, by book, by direct action, he charges, with all the power of his hatred, against hostile society.

This very wrath, however, lends him a strange lucidity. He is triumphant in concrete satire. His portraits, from college professors to the masters of the press and revolutionary leaders, are drawn mordantly, with a picturesque relief. An instinct immediately shows him the ridiculous detail which will bring his verve into play. His childhood memories, with the unforgettable figures of the peasant mother and the father dulled by an obscure professorship, are those of a less idealized and infinitely more complex Poil de Carotte. He has a gift of dry humour which proceeds through displays of flowery rhetoric followed by sudden recalls to the realities of life, through wilful nonsense. This mechanical, grimacing irony which is never a relaxation he turns against himself. With him it takes the place of the critical faculty. After evoking the revolutionary enthusiasm, the faith in what a Georges Sorel would call "the '93 myth," he pulls up sharp to question himself: "I often happen to wonder too if I have not left one low pedantry for another and if, after the university classics, there are not the Revolutionary classics—with red headmasters and a Jacobin baccalaureate!" The intimate despair which fills the twelve hundred pages of Jacques Vingtras has its source in this suffering. In spite of all his love and all his hatred, Vallès does not belong to the people and his work, too broad or too narrow, will never become really popular. He passed through the Pension Legnagna, was a winner of prizes, quite like Taine's Etienne Mayran. Vallès is an insurgent, an irreconcilable, not a workman. However cruelly he may have wounded his contemporaries, he was unable to satisfy his rancour on them; and it was his own proud poverty he brought to the "great confederation of sorrows."

CHAPTER V

ORIGINS OF THE CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

THERE is an immediate notoriety in theatrical manifestations and the victories which a literary school wins on the stage are in a way its public trophies. In the applause it hears the supreme confirmation of its action on the crowd. We have told how the Naturalists had tried to conquer the theatre. It was a partial success, soon compromised as other influences made themselves felt. In 1889 appeared the translation of two plays by Ibsen: *Ghosts* and *The Doll's House.* Three years later, Lugné-Poë was to place his *Maison de l'Œuvre* under the ægis of the Scandinavian symbolist. Moreover the *Théâtre Libre* itself was not bound to any theory. It was indeed asserted that "Antoine was the prisoner of a little band of ultra-Naturalistic writers"; but "it was impossible to make a graver mistake with regard to Antoine's mentality." We borrow this testimony from François de Curel whose work, representative of everything this conventional Antoine was supposed to hate, was revealed by the real Antoine.

1. FRANÇOIS DE CUREL AND THE DRAMA OF IDEAS

If an election were held to designate a "prince" of French playwrights of the last thirty years, François de Curel would without the least doubt be elected. Even those who cannot give him their love would not begrudge him this homage of their admiration. From his first play he assured himself an exceptional situation. Perhaps he is not mistaken when he states he has since evolved; but he has evolved in accordance with his own law, without seeking to satisfy any other judge than his own exacting logic.

Born at Metz, heir of a noble family of the Bar and of a family of big manufacturers, François de Curel has often expressed his amusement at the impotent efforts of journalists to reconcile the picture of this intrepid, jovial huntsman with the legendary figure of him who was once called the French Ibsen. Quite wrongly, moreover, for Curel's intentions are always perfectly clear. It is by no means from this external duality that springs the difficulty, the embarrassment which often accompanies the enthusiasm aroused by the performance of his

plays: "What would you say," he asks, "of a hybrid soul in which the meditative curiosity of a Montaigne was linked with the fantastic flight of a Musset?" This definition of Curel by himself is somewhat surprising. One feels there are other names than Musset's which would indicate more clearly the second tendency to which he alludes. Such as it is, this sentence at least aids us to understand why, in spite of so many and so pressing entreaties, Curel has always refused to treat in psychological novels the subjects for which his intelligence imperiously demanded the life of the stage, more concentrated, more incisive, more "passionate." "The theatre! The theatre! Monsieur de Curel!" Charles Maurras was right when he thus advised the author of *Le Sauvetage du Grand-Duc;* but he scarcely suspected that the "unfortunate vaudevillist" whom he addressed was to make his first appearance in the world of letters with *L'Envers d'une sainte.*

In this play, which had first been called *L'Ortie,* Curel depicted a "woman who was voluntarily a saint, unconsciously criminal, sacrificed and impassioned, desired by man and confiscated by God." Without acting, by her sole entreaties, this Julie endangers the happiness of all the creatures with whom she comes into contact, whether she ensnares them by love or by intelligence. The character is drawn with an inexorable logic still further heightened by the psychological abruptness imposed by the theatre. In a desire for justice, Curel, when altering this play, modified one scene in which Julie frankly gave way to revenge and "tasted an infernal pleasure." He by no means attenuated its heroic bitterness. The greatness of this drama which Sarcey declared "screamingly funny" and Lemaître "of an exquisite quality" is inseparable from a certain ferocity. Did not François de Curel say, in *La Nouvelle Idole,* that the way of every thinker is paved with corpses?

Les Fossiles is one of the most popular of his works. The picture is broader. It is that of a "mortal winter," of the convulsions of a dying nobility for which the author has no blind adoration but which owes it to itself to pass away gracefully, at the head of the modern world, "leaving the same impression of greatness as the gigantic fossils evoking bygone ages." This play combines all the characteristics of a work by Curel: a central idea translated into images which suggest eloquent speeches on the symbolic sea and forest; a poetic setting (in this case the Ardennes) or one poetized by its correspondence with the sentiments evoked; characters for whom the dramatic incident is but the concrete manifestation of a mental law. Now a drama thus conceived certainly does not develop without difficulty. Hélène is merely a dramatic dummy, indispensable but unconvincing. The last

act of *Les Fossiles* is purely oratorical and one feels the author speaking. Curel is not ignorant of the danger, in such plays, of action and ideas conflicting. He admits that success in this field always has something "miraculous" about it. Is it not much to have accomplished this miracle in the first three acts where the Duke, Robert and Claire, serving the same god, clash with pathetic rage even in his moments of supreme inhumanity?

L'Invitée marks a lessening of the tension. It is easier to understand and achieved a great success. Putting aside the difficult postulate, it will be possible to see in it merely a comedy of a mother who, long driven from the home, returns and, thanks to her daughters, plays an excellent trick on her husband and this idiot's mistress. The naïve bewilderment of this worthy man when he discovers he is not . . . what for fifteen years he thought he was, will be appreciated; but, on closer examination, there will soon be felt what is peculiar to Curel: the infinite melancholy of this Anna who has made a mess of her life and in whom nothing any longer blossoms spontaneously, not even maternal love.

François de Curel is not regarded as a painter of love. This problem could not leave him indifferent; but it presented itself in the form of a subject "which seemed to defy him." He had treated it in *Sauvé des eaux* (1889) which he rewrote and reproduced in 1893 under the title *L'Amour brode* and to which, in 1914, he gave its final form in *La Danse devant le miroir.* The essential difference between the first and second versions was the significant intervention of an idea, that of the love lie. Nevertheless the play failed. Lemaître saw in it "an exceptional psychology, too arbitrary, seemingly, for the stage." Sarcey treated his heroes as "complex and unexplained *Marivaudeurs.*" Curel finally declared it "unacceptable" and treated it as a preliminary sketch for *La Danse.* This withdraws from us the right to discuss it. Yet it would be unjust not to say that, though difficult to admit on the stage by reason of the capricious violence of its psychological shortcuts and that fund of romanticism whereby Curel does perhaps resemble the Musset he invokes, *L'Amour brode* delights the reader, thanks to the pitiless tension of this test by the lie in which the two lovers stand face to face. Possibly this trilogy which forms but one play reflects Curel's real anguish better than any other of his works. In the three versions the woman puts the capital question in the last act: "Is that also conventional, artificial, written?" Gabrielle asked René: "Is it also the conventional, the artificial which makes you so sad?" Gabrielle repeats to Charles. Similarly Régime will question Paul: "Is it the artificial, the conventional which makes us

so sad?" Is it doubt of love alone or of all human thought which Curel expresses here?

La Figurante is, in the same sense as *L'Invitée*, a dramatic comedy. It was, in its primitive form, the first play Curel sent Antoine. He worked it over, with his admirable tenacity in exhausting all the possibilities of a subject, in order to attenuate the improbability of the initial premise. It is indeed rather rare for a girl to accept the position of figure-head wife on the invitation of her future husband's mistress. The interest of the play lies in the study of the characters (particularly that of the old savant who uses the three others as pawns), in the authority with which the dramatist develops the whole situation, even in its almost farcical aspects, and in the extraordinary flexibility of the dialogue; but however savoury the strategy which opposes the coalition of Françoise and her uncle to the alliance of the two lovers, it is almost exclusively the qualities of virtuosity which triumph in *La Figurante*.

It is not the same with *La Nouvelle Idole* and *Le Repas du Lion* which are less two plays than two ample frescoes of contemporary society. *Le Repas du Lion* commands respect by the generosity of its inspiration, its loyalty in conducting a discussion careful to present the most conflicting points of view. Its protagonist, Jean, having dramatically vowed to devote himself to the workingmen, believes at first he can help them through Catholic social organizations. Then, having seen his mistake, when the murder of his brother-in-law, the employer, has freed him from the remorse of having caused the death of a workman, he discovers he will be more useful to them by becoming their leader. This play, in which Curel (who was never personally engaged in industry but was connected with it in numerous ways) was the first to introduce the social question on the stage, traces the development of this character who was vital and representative enough for Albert de Mun to have found in him points of resemblance with himself. The characters of the other "lions," captains of industry or leaders of the workers, are also vigorously depicted; but, because of its very scope, of its ambition to be complete, the second part of this work goes beyond the theatre and the author himself admits it: "The first act interprets, not the meditations of a thinker, but the fury of a hermit who foresees that his desert is to be invaded and soiled; and it is this seductive act which pleases everybody. So true is it that the idea is powerful only when guided by passion." Following the dress rehearsal he had modified his play in favour of a dénouement "in which thought seeks vainly to flower on the barren soil of melodrama." He gave it up and, in the last revision, as if the performance had been

but a sort of test for this readjustment, he strove to be merely fair-minded, faithful to the idea of his drama. In this ultimate form "*Le Repas du Lion* which has stated so many problems and solved none of them, ends on a new note of interrogation"; but even more than in 1897 does it deserve Faguet's judgment: "A great poem betrayed by the theatre."

La Nouvelle Idole, on the contrary, calls for none of these reserves, and no play by Curel has been more docile to his principle of "resolving delicate situations by catastrophes of ideas instead of placing the *coups de théâtre* in the facts." Here are three beings who personify three ideals: religious faith, faith in love, faith in science. At first they clash. Then each is led to understand the greatness of the others and the struggle becomes but a "rivalry in generosity." Their anxious inquiry continues through intensely salient scenes like the dialogue between the two savants in the second act where the images and symbols blossom naturally—witness the perfect passage on the water-lilies. It ends, like *Le Repas du Lion*, in an atmosphere of serenity, above all conflicts; but a serenity to which an approaching death, voluntarily accepted, adds a note of restrained pathos.

Its hero, after all, is exceptional in this only that he devotes his life to problems of which others think but incidentally. Yet none of his anguish can leave thinking humanity indifferent. Without sacrificing any of his lofty greatness, François de Curel has realized in *La Nouvelle Idole* that balance between the plot and the idea which he called miraculous.

2. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAMA

When he gave the reading public of 1920 a volume entitled *Anatomie sentimentale*, composed of fragments of his works "arranged like a series of pictures," Georges de Porto-Riche rendered very exact justice to that "love drama," to that drama which is and wishes to be merely a study of the love problem such as "man's perpetual gallantry and woman's deep sensibility present it to our epoch." In the duel he has observed so minutely Porto-Riche does not conceal that his sympathies are with "the woman whose sad lot it is to suffer. For, in France, the man is seldom in love. He is scarcely sensual." One sees the narrowness of the field in which he confines the two opponents, excluding in the woman every feeling other than love, rejecting in the man every intellectual effort not directed toward love.

That there is a family resemblance among all Porto-Riche's plays is very evident; but the author is by no means wrong in distinguishing in this succession a gradation. *La Chance de Françoise* undertakes

to destroy the belief that happiness is possible in love. Françoise has married Marcel. Thanks to her good luck she keeps him, in spite of all his wishes to betray her; but what a tottering, precarious triumph! Like Thérèse in *Le Vieil Homme* Françoise might sadly conclude: "As long as you are young enough to be loved, I shall be young enough to suffer." *L'Infidèle*, which takes place in a conventional Venetian setting and to which the verses add no poetry, carries this idea one step further. In vain will the woman whose lover is tired of her try to arouse his jealousy. This will even turn against her. *Amoureuse* finally sums up, in a more striking form, the theme of the two plays which preceded it. Germaine loves her husband, Etienne. Then, gradually, by the simple play of his own selfishness, he comes to endure this devotion as a tyranny. Love renders clumsy the woman who loves and cruel the man who suffers that love with impatience. It leads them to the worst disasters and comforts them, as enemies, in mutual revolt.

Le Passé, which is probably Porto-Riche's most perfect work, makes it possible to state clearly the capital problem of his art. The man here is called François Prieur. He is the professional lover, elegant, a smooth talker, who lies, lies, lies desperately, who is tormented by a ceaselessly recurrent desire for amorous seduction and who scorns the momentary object of this desire as soon as he has gratified it. He is surrounded by a group of friends who are quite capable of insulting him in his absence but who are less devoid of scruples merely because they have not the scope of this modern Don Juan. His victim, Dominique, is presented as "a daughter of Racine," a definition which permits us to specify a misunderstanding. That Musset, Marivaux and Racine are Porto-Riche's masters no one will deny, but on condition of indicating the differences and why Racine's heroines are far more varied and harmonious. Their vital force comes from the fact they are by no means obsessed by a single point of view. Now it will readily be admitted that there has been, from the time of Racine to that of Porto-Riche, a moral slackening (between Pauline and Phèdre there is already an analogous relaxing of rigid principles), even a diminution of grace in favour of frankness; but one would wish then that the concern for duty and for glory which entered into conflict with love in the seventeenth century had been replaced, at the end of the nineteenth, by the preoccupations of a modern intelligence. Now there is nothing of the sort in Dominique, Germaine or Françoise. By dint of holding undisputed sway in these souls, love has become reduced to the fixed idea of physical possession. It is not by chance that the revolt which frees Dominique from the past is brought about by her lover's proposal to lead her to the bed where he has possessed his for-

mer mistress. The struggle may gain in sharpness thereby; but it loses in breadth and characters so voluntarily incomplete remain, as a consequence, tainted with a touch of the arbitrary.

The abnormal proportions and the symbolical aims of *Le Vieil Homme* should not mislead. The struggle remains the same. It involves a woman who loves, has been deceived, has forgiven and sees her husband fall in love with a chance acquaintance. She eagerly defends what is hers. The presence of a child who begins like Chérubin and ends like Werther merely renders concrete here the fatality of passion. Augustin is the "host" of a new sacrifice; but the postulate has not changed. Thérèse, even after her son's death, cannot live without Michel's body. For, accepting Constant's epigram, love—a fever in one sex and a normal state in the other—by no means prevents that, by limiting his portrayal of humanity to love (in which he declares man is inferior), Porto-Riche also diminishes woman as a consequence. By intentionally neglecting all the seductions which, without being properly speaking love itself, can make a man love, Porto-Riche leaves his heroines no other guide than physical attraction and, involuntarily, he calumniates their finest aberrations. It is easy then to explain the dénouement of *Le Marchand d'estampes.* Daniel has revealed to his wife that he loves another. They have fought together against this passion. In vain! Fanny cannot make him forget her rival. She succeeds with difficulty in preventing him from going to join her. He stays then desperate, determined on suicide. She throws herself with him into the Seine, without this common death being able to reunite them. Porto-Riche's art has not recoiled before its logical, inhuman consequence.

It is easier to conceive, after a detailed study of this dramatic production, the value of the *Anatomie sentimentale* and why isolated scenes in it are preferable to the complete plays. The arbitrary character of the construction is less obvious here. Care must however be taken not to relegate Porto-Riche's work to the library. The stage alone can fully manifest its literary qualities. The dialogue usually keeps a perfect ease and theatrical expressions are rare. Psychological delicacies constantly charm the mind, taking spontaneously the form of an unexpected and definitive rejoinder: "Are not all charms to be found in your heart?" Augustin asks his mother. "But it is another's face you want," she answers, sadly. In great crises these phrases multiply with a clairvoyant frankness, creating an atmosphere of tense passion in which hearts are laid bare, in which are ruthlessly revealed the desires but exceptionally disclosed by a disciplined humanity in this state of elementary purity; and above these sharp cries passes at

times a breeze of pity for all this suffering inevitably provoked by love. "Take my word," says Fanny to Daniel, "let us remain good friends. We have so much to suffer, both of us, and because of each other." Too exclusively prisoners of love to know the sharp awakening of a Princesse de Clèves or of a Julien Sorel and not sufficiently lost in amorous enchantment to experience the ecstasies of Tristan and Isolde, Porto-Riche's men and women sometimes find such moments of melancholy appeasement in their great sorrow.

Jules Lemaître's tastes were too undulating for him not to have been tempted by the stage as he had been by poetry and the novel; but he brought to the theatre not so much the tense will of a creator as the nonchalant observation of the critic. *Revoltée, Marriage blanc* and *L'Aîné* owe their value—and particularly when read—to the same tender, scrupulous delicacy which lent a quiet charm to the best of his poetic confidences.

Maurice Donnay is, on the contrary, an *homme de théâtre.* He never totally repudiated his beginnings with *Lysistrata* in which, on the Aristophanic theme, he embroidered the arabesques of the *Chat Noir*—a type of play which can be made over and brought up to date at each revival. All Donnay's works are limited by this eternal sacrifice to current interest, by his preoccupation with giving immediate pleasure to the public of the moment. *Amants*—the picture of a sincere attempt at love in an artificial atmosphere and of characters not sufficiently depraved for every kind of cowardice without being strong enough for great sacrifices—gives a fairly accurate idea of his manner. The plot is conducted very slowly, the characters studied indirectly, with an air of anticipatory distaste for all true grandeur.

The author relies on the charm of his dialogue which is witty and spirited, which amuses the spectator for an evening but could not stand the test of deep meditation.

This inadequacy appeared more clearly in the plays which followed. Their documentary value concerning questions which moved public opinion at the moment of their production is undeniable. *La Douloureuse* and *L'Affranchie* shed light upon the effeteness of society at the end of the century and upon the tone of feminist discussions. Unfortunately they do not rise above this level, either through the plot based upon the conventional psychology of an artificial environment and admitting solutions convenient rather than necessary, or through the importance of the principal characters who do not so much develop as take advantage of theatrically pathetic situations as they arise. *Georgette Lemeunier* and *Le Torrent* still skirt the great themes—con-

flict between love and money, the hardness of inflexible marriage, the problem of the child, the demoralizing influence of luxury; but Donnay hesitates between the play which pleases the public and that which shocks it. In the end he stops at the formula of a play in which the struggle reduces itself to a combat between the public passivity and the temperament of the interpreters. He gives the latter long speeches to which their action can lend an air of boldness. He flatters the audience with a picture very attentive to their passing tastes, from the fashionable author to the fashionable cocktail.

The plays of those who might, after Porto-Riche, be the representatives of the psychological drama, do not seem to succeed in throwing off this tyranny of current interest, without falling into the problem play. In studying contemporary drama we shall see that such weakness has never allowed Maurice Donnay to go beyond the fanciful comedy of which his *Education de Prince* remains the type, and that it has also prevented Alfred Capus and Henri Lavedan from attaining, even in their most ambitious works, an indisputable human reality.

3. THE PROBLEM PLAY

Is that "truth" in the name of which all dramatic revolutions are brought about, to be found in the problem play? It is a title which must first be defined. The problem play is more than a play with a purpose and however one-sided they may be, the tragedies of Euripides are by no means problem plays. The problem play distinguishes itself from the drama of ideas (of the Curel type) by being less interested in an eternal passion than in a contemporary social difficulty. Augier and Dumas *fils* had given its first models, Dumas especially in his last plays where the Boulevard spirit becomes apocalyptic. Becque's cold realism had damped these impetuous enthusiasms. Dumas's heirs no longer proclaimed themselves avengers but doers of justice.

Paul Hervieu began simultaneously as novelist and as playwright; but the severe critic of the aristocratic life described in *Peints par eux-mêmes* and *L'Armature* seemed also to construct his novels like plays, with the same vigour which characterized *Les Paroles restent*, *La Loi de l'homme* and *Les Tenailles*. Strength and logic—such were the qualities praised by his admirers. They also extolled in him a certain dramatic nudity where they claimed to find an echo of classical tragedy.

Looking back we must abate considerably. Not that Hervieu's theatrical conception is in itself inacceptable. The abstract setting in which it pleases him to place his principal characters is not incompatible with greatness; but it must be animated by deep feeling. Austerity is admissible provided life is not allowed to escape. The draw-

back is that, when studied, Hervieu's drama entirely excludes the element of mystery in which had resided the power of his novel, *L'Inconnu*, and reveals an aridity over which the devices of a clumsy practitioner cast but little illusion. His plays are too often constructed upon the same schematic basis: man and wife bound together; union complicated by a child and a lover; no legal means of uniting these four factors in a satisfactory equation. Hervieu strives ingeniously but in vain to hide the mediocre value of this matter. In *Les Paroles restent* he revives, under the aspect of the old doctor Dubois, the ancient chorus. In *La Loi de l'homme* he resorts to a parallelism from which Shakespeare derived one of the most powerful effects in *King Lear:* d'Orcien deceived by his wife, and Laure de Raguais deceived by her husband, forgive because of the child. In *Les Tenailles* he utilizes the law which is a cheap and surely very precarious fatality. There is, throughout these plays, a poverty and a conventionality in the invention which can only be compared with the mixture of platitudes and bombast uttered by the characters. Everything in them is contrived with a view to theatrical optics in a repulsive spirit of economy. Incidental detail: Hervieu, upholder of the family, always conceives it as reduced to one child, "the child," just enough child to complicate the drama of adultery and to permit great laws of nature to be evoked. Hervieu never, even in *La Course du Flambeau* and *Le Dédale*, succeeds in freeing himself from these conventions.

Brieux's effort is less pretentious but more frankly honest. *Blanchette* had, as early as 1892, shown him capable of constructing a good bourgeois play which would have touched Diderot's heart. One might have foreseen from this writer a series of realistic pictures as useful to the representation of an epoch as the broad Balzacian frescoes thenceforth undertaken by Emile Fabre. Unfortunately Brieux let himself be carried away by the idea of the problem play. He brought to it sincere moral and social considerations; but with *La Robe rouge* his faults became fully apparent: absence of psychological shadings, mechanical constructions, easy emotion, abuse of lecture-like speeches, prosaic inspiration and style. Even when animated with the most generous intentions, the problem play, reduced to concealing its virtuous aims beneath a scandalous title, turned manifestly to the tedious lesson and ended in a blind alley.

4. LIGHT COMEDY

During this period a man showed there was room in light comedy for something other than the wastrels depicted in *Le Nouveau Jeu* by Henri Lavedan (not yet a hermit) and the puppets in whom Alfred

Capus embodied for a few evenings his nonchalant optimism. Molière has often been evoked in connection with Georges Courteline. He himself has given some consistency to this comparison by adding a sixth act to *Le Misanthrope* with *La Conversion d'Alceste*, a somewhat sombre, rather affected pastiche in which the author gives us above all the uneasiness of Sunday clothes.

For it is precisely his natural ease we love in Courteline, his rich, racy observation, that hatred of the didactic, in short, which is equally opposed to the emphasis of Alceste and to the complacency of Philinte. At an epoch when so many playwrights have yielded to the temptation of transforming the theatre into a pulpit, Courteline has kept life there in the foreground. He does not deny the spectator the right to reflect, once the curtain has fallen, or to find matter for meditation even in the most ludicrous situations which have passed on the stage; but he desires that in his work the lesson should remain implicit, as in life. Hence his taste for sketches like *Le Droit aux étrennes* and *Les Boulingrin* where fancy abandons itself to every violent extravagance, where the comic is physical, awakening in us the profound hilarity of children who see Punch thrash the policeman.

Courteline has kept something of this instinctive disposition to jeer at authority. The mediæval mysteries poke good fun at the devil. A power, even if it be redoubtable, always invites mockery. The light-hearted story-teller of *Les Gaités de l'escadron* and *Le Train de 8 h. 47* was also to be the painter of *Messieurs les Rond-de-Cuir*. Everything that is officially organized, military or bureaucratic, finds itself, for this very reason, subject to laws necessarily lagging behind manners and customs. The absurdity of regulations and the little oddities of individuals forms a double quarry for the comic author. A sharp satire on institutions should not be sought in Courteline. *Le Commissaire est bon enfant*, *Le Gendarme est sans pitié*, *Une Lettre chargée* and *Hortense, couche-toi* are constructed in accordance with the two-beat rhythm. In the first part, one character tyrannizes over the others and, strong in the power which the law, literally interpreted, confers upon him, refuses to listen to the voice of his common sense. He is confounded in the end, because someone confronts him with an article of the Code which, taken with the same literalness, overwhelms him in his turn, this text moreover being conceivably identical in both cases. It sometimes happens, as shown in *Un Client sérieux*, that injustice manifestly triumphs; but there is left us the resource of laughing at it. For anyone who is not abnormally unskilful, there are ways of swaying the incorruptible Labourbourax. One is not considered mad so long as one does not trouble the policeman of one's quarter. You will de-

cide, according to your temperament, whether this conclusion is alarming or reassuring.

It would be singularly to diminish Courteline's work to reduce it to a satire of judicial or administrative pettinesses. It is humanity he shows in action, even in rapid sketches like *La Voiture versée* or *La Peur des coups* which, like certain of Molière's farces, are summaries of psychological gradations more minutely detailed in other works. Courteline has, in *Boubouroche*, drawn an unforgettable picture of his humanity. It is commonplace. Let a great crisis arrive, man's eternal weakness and the ineradicable self-esteem which blinds him to the evident treachery will be observed. Resigned or aggressive, woman's cowardice, her shy, childish soul will always be found. As Courteline sees it in 1893, so he still paints it in *La Paix chez soi* in 1908, and in *La Cruche* in 1909. It is true, in the last two pieces, he accords one of his actors the lucid consciousness of this "misery"; but their clear-sightedness remains passive, does not rebel to shake off the stupid yoke of everyday life.

A pessimistic conception, it will be said. By no means. Several species of men and women coexist in humanity. Courteline has observed one of them, has depicted it perfectly, leaving the others intact. The result proved he had chosen skilfully. His Alceste is but a puppet, his Boubouroche is a lasting creation. Boubouroche lives by that gift, possessed by Courteline, of representing a being completely adapted to his environment or to his function: the gendarme Labourbourax, the plaintiff La Brige. The two acts of the masterpiece of which Boubouroche is the protagonist manifest two different aspects of a single talent. Nothing is more inimitably natural than the game of *manille* where, in the setting of the little café which is truly *his* setting, Boubouroche appears entirely himself, his simplicity inflated with self-sufficiency and with sentimentality. Nothing more cleverly characterized than the abruptly shifting farce which rushes headlong through the second act, full of psychological shortcuts based upon a very sure observation of its object. The combination of the two qualities exactly defines Georges Courteline's comic genius.

5. VERSE DRAMA

The French theatrical public has a taste for pageantry. Hence its affection for verse drama which, since the Romantics, is generally a compromise between pure poetry and melodrama. Coming from the pessimistic pictures presented it by Becque and the *Théâtre Libre*, it asked of the verse drama a little consolation and applauded even François Coppée's *Pour la Couronne*. Edmond Rostand had the luck to

appear at the most favourable moment for his success and the cleverness to understand it at once.

He had begun with a volume of verse, *Les Musardises*, in which he displayed the same preciousness which was to assure the fortune of his first comedy, *Les Romanesques*. An analysis of its subject sums up faithfully enough the kind of imagination peculiar to Rostand. The hero of the piece is a wall separating two houses the owners of which have but one desire, to unite their two estates and to live on friendly terms. This is possible only through the marriage of their children, too romantic to accept so prosaic a solution. Therefore the fathers simulate hatred, accumulating false obstacles. Romantic love does its work and casts down the wall. Soon everyone grows tired of this calm happiness. The lovers, undeceived, demand the really romantic. The wall, rebuilt, will be destroyed again and for good, when unhappy adventures have led these scatterbrains to recognize the value of a solid, comfortable reality.

It is well to insist upon this first play of Rostand's. If we are to take his word, it had the merit of bringing

Un repos naïf des pièces amères.

Alas! There was, in his case, not the slightest naïveté but much duplicity, an extreme skill in concealing exceedingly bourgeois thoughts under an abundance of variations the lyricism of which was soon exhausted. At first sight the poems interpolated in the text, the tirades hung on picturesque words—the wall, the verse, the abduction—gave fairly well the impression of a spontaneous outburst. Soon the economy of this factitious wealth was perceived. The dense bad taste of this pretended lightness revealed itself in disquieting lapses:

Du roman, j'en voulais bien un peu
Comme on met du laurier dedans le pot-au-feu,

said Sylvette. Did she wish to define her creator's poetry?

Clearly Rostand was at ease only in the false. An instinct warned him of it and impelled him to the painting of epochs swayed by that subtle bad taste which is the flower of the imagination and announces the perfection of a fine classic fruit; but, powerless to recreate spontaneously that atmosphere of free fantasy, he stopped short at the pitiful picturesqueness which makes *dinde* rhyme with *Melissinde*, at the arbitrary psychology of the knights and the traitors of melodrama, at the sonorous, vain *coups de théâtre* which the crowd expects and applauds in advance.

When it came to expressing a noble sentiment, his genius suggested to him merely these dreary platitudes:

. . . Car tout rayon qui filtre, d'idéal,
Est autant de gagné, dans l'âme, sur le mal.
Je vois dans tout but noble un but plus noble poindre;
Car lorsqu'on eut un rêve, on n'en prend pas un moindre.

Decidedly everything great remained foreign to Rostand. His *Samaritaine* gave the decisive proof. In that gospel in three tableaux—which is to a sacred drama what Massenet's *Marie Madeleine* is to one of Bach's Passions—the indigence of the thought vies with the impropriety of the form, and the result would be odious were it not so profoundly ridiculous.

In *Cyrano de Bergerac* Edmond Rostand is found intact. Once more the ear notes in passing all his usual defects: false picturesqueness; coarse, easily infallible theatrical effects; summary psychology in which the refinements of passion are cheaply replaced by verbal elaboration. As for the poetic vestment, it is not without holes. Preciousness and vulgarity alternate. The juggling of the rhymes puts up with far from witty expedients. Under the brilliant flourish of trumpets, how many purely oratorical developments! Yet the triumph of *Cyrano* is not to be explained by external causes alone, by the public's lassitude for the Ibsenian or realistic drama, by the need it felt, amid civil discords, for a homage to the traditional qualities of generosity and wit. *Cyrano*—which is not a masterpiece—does not deserve oblivion, because it depicts a real drama, Cyrano's drama and Rostand's—the drama of the writer of second rank who aspires to genius. In this "heroic comedy" which contains so many plays upon words and anachronisms, in which every character but one is a puppet led by chance, all the rest may well be illusory but this tragedy of the failure is truthful. Rostand has been reproached with having, among other solecisms, diverted the historic Cyrano from his true character to make him the symbolic type of the French "swaggerer." He seems rather to have found, two centuries and a half distant, a personage sufficiently qualified to experience his own emotions. He therefore entrusted him with his ambitions, his disappointments, his bitternesses, veiled with the good humour which his own successes invited him to lend another. Lastly, in several penetrating scenes of a muffled music, he has given his hero that melancholy which he must have known in his lucid hours when he divined that the rôle played by Cyrano de Bergerac with respect to Molière would perhaps, one day, be his in the presence of the great dramatic poet whom, since Racine, the French stage has been awaiting.

CHAPTER VI

SYMBOLISM

1. THE SYMBOLIST MOVEMENT

THE complete history of Symbolism has been sufficiently studied for it to be summarized in its broad lines. Two of the future masters of Symbolism, Verlaine and Mallarmé, had contributed to *Le Parnasse contemporain.* The war and the success of the true Parnassians delayed, for a decade, the homage which was their due. Little by little the young turned towards them—some guided by a chapter of *A Rebours,* others acquainted with Verlaine's work through a criticism in *La Nouvelle Rive gauche,* soon followed by his becoming a contributor to that review (1882). The poet thus defined the origins of the movement: "A certain number of young men, tired of always reading the same sad horrors, called Naturalistic . . . a little detached from the Parnassian serenity, took it into their heads one day to read my verses, written for the most part without any preoccupation with schools. These verses pleased them . . . As chance would have it, I published at the propitious moment *Les Poètes maudits,* a good deal for Corbière and Mallarmé, but above all for Rimbaud." This new group was given the name of *Décadents,* flung them by the mockers as an insult, with which they adorned themselves proudly since it evoked a verse of their favourite poet:

Je suis l'empire à la fin de la décadence.

This title, which allowed Huysmans to unite Verlaine, Villiers and Mallarmé in a common admiration, was scarcely susceptible of any but a negative meaning. The number of the revolutionaries grew. The *Nouvelle Rive gauche* became *Lutèce* (1883) to which contributed Laforgue, Tailhade and Moréas who was—the first it seems—to speak of "Symbolism" in *Le XIX^e siècle,* 11 August, 1885. There were henceforth the Symbolists and the Decadents who lived together, in the main, on good terms. Régnier, Paul Adam and Viélé-Griffin first published in *Lutèce.* Moréas founded *Le Symbolisme* with Paul Adam and Gustave Kahn. In 1886, in *Le Scapin,* Alfred Vallette drew the following picture: "It is from Baudelaire, from the Parnassian group, then from Mallarmé and Verlaine—dissidents of this group—that the adolescent poetry of to-day was born. . . . Prose does not

evolve in precisely the same direction as poetry. . . . Symbolism will remain where it is: in poetry. It is there and there only it can hope for some years of existence as a school."

Nevertheless the two groups could not live apart from each other. *La Vogue*, which began in April, 1886, published Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations* and the second part of the *Poètes maudits*, among works by Kahn, Laforgue, Moréas, Mallarmé, Villiers. The extraordinary Anatole Baju's *Le Décadent*—journal, then review—tried hard, under Verlaine's patronage, to safeguard *Décadisme* against the Symbolist wave, to establish a distinction which Ernest Raynaud states thus: "The Decadents differed from the Symbolists in this that they admitted direct emotion, the exact translation of the phenomena of life, instead of exacting their transposition, that they did not lengthen the *alexandrin* beyond measure and that they used the fixed forms." Both, however, were associated in the same reaction against *Le Parnasse* and Naturalism, in the same love of the dream and of music. As early as 1889—the year when Jules Huret opened an inquiry on the death of Naturalism—Léon Deschamps's *La Plume* brought together all the dispersed efforts and received side by side the Symbolists, the Décadistes and the *poètes romans*. The end of 1889 saw the birth of *Le Mercure de France* (sequel to *La Pléiade*) which, more favourable at first to the Decadents, was to become, by force of circumstances, the fortress of Symbolism. Because it had an affirmative sense, it was in fact the adjective "Symbolist" which obtained the honour of designating one of the most glorious periods of French poetry. It would be possible to dispute endlessly concerning its justness and its inadequacy. It is probably clearer to us than it was to those whose works contributed to widen its significance, and its best definition consists in studying the diverse works which are covered by that convenient label. In the mass, the general tendency of the Symbolist poets is indicated by a saying of Joubert's taken literally: "Beautiful verses are those which exhale themselves like sounds or perfumes" and by these verses of Baudelaire's:

Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent . . .
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.

It is, by different means, an art of "correspondences." Gourmont has indicated that there should be seen in it "an extremely individualistic, extremely idealistic literature . . . the very variety and liberty of which ought to correspond to personal visions of the world." He has noted equally what remained in it of "enlarged and sublimated

Naturalism" and delicately emphasized the influence, on its sudden outburst, of Moréas, "bold young stranger, rather brutal, little acquainted with our literary prejudices, or disdaining them." This complex ensemble of aspiration is on the whole faithfully represented by Rimbaud's title, *Les Illuminations*, if there be added to the precise pictorial sense given it by the author that of dazzling visions of the internal and external world which an unprepared reader would be quite ready to lend it. The symbol, strictly speaking, was only an element of evocation, the essential aim of this poetry.

From the technical point of view—and according to the degrees the study of its various masters will establish—Symbolism attempted to free French verse in all its forms. It suppressed the fixed cæsura of the *alexandrin* and succeeded: it abolished the tyranny of the rhyme, it rehabilitated uneven rhythms, it attempted free verse. Without doubt these attempts did not all have an equal success, but not one was totally sterile.

2. THREE PRECURSORS

Of the three poets whom Verlaine undertook to rehabilitate in 1884 against an unjust oblivion, two are now readily considered his equals. Tristan Corbière alone has remained a *poète maudit*. The critics who are sympathetic towards him mingle grave reserves with their praises. Huysmans accuses him of "talking nigger," Gourmont grants him merely "sudden jerks of genius" amid much heavy rubbish. Jules Laforgue—who borrowed a great deal from him—reproaches him with having "no technique." Yet if it be considered that after a delicate childhood in Brittany, two journeys in Palestine and in Italy and four years' residence in Paris, he died before reaching his thirtieth year, the single volume he published, in 1873, will appear the more instructive and moving.

It is divided into two parts, the Breton and the Parisian. In *Amor* and *Gens de mer* a powerful inspiration gives itself free rein and its description mingles the memory of old emotions with young ironies. *La Rapsode foraine* in which he evokes the pilgrimage of Sainte-Anne-de-la-Palud represents fairly well the two aspects of this talent.

Doubtless he does not maintain this perfection of lyric realism in all the poems he devoted to the rugged Breton country of Léon and to its seafaring folk; but he keeps in them qualities of a picturesque, brutal story-teller, that truculence in the extreme precision of the details which makes *Bossu Bitor* equal Kipling's best maritime pictures. Corbière overthrows all the conventional painting of the sailor. He shows him as he really is and, in his name, disdainfully rejects the eloquent

condolences of the rhetorician Hugo. *La Fin* permits us to imagine what Corbière would have thought of Jean Richepin's lucubrations.

In *Les Amours jaunes*, his poetry is at once more debatable and still more novel. The man reveals himself more in it, with a sincere disgust of cliques, a desire to protect his barbarous originality against all the schools.

It is easy to understand and to approve the hatred of sentimentality which dictates *Le Fils de Lamartine* or this quatrain:

Moreau—j'oubliais—Hégésippe,
Créateur de l'art-hôpital . . .
Depuis j'ai la phtisie en grippe;
Ce n'est plus même original . . .

and the hatred of eloquence which inspired him with this portrait:

Hugo: l'homme apocalyptique,
L'homme—ceci—tuera—cela,
Garde national épique!
Il n'en reste qu'un—celui-la!

What a prodigious poet had he given this incisive distinctness to all his work! Unhappily he does not free himself from a conventional romantic pessimism. He stiffens in the attitude of *Le Paria*, assumes a factitious Satanism, bristling with insults, hoarse laughter, offensive prosiness traversed (see *Litanie*) by echoes of Baudelaire's sensual Catholicism. And all that, surely, is very literary! The desire for caricature which makes him offer the reader a "sonnet with the way to use it" degenerates into a cosmopolitan salad. He mingles languages, apostrophes, visions (*Grand Opéra*) in a parodic intention which ends in nonsense ("*O Vénus dans la Vénérie*," *Chanson en si*, etc.). In the long poems, like *Litanie du Sommeil*, the rhythm is lost, the language becomes insipid, all is dull balderdash. At such instants he seems to justify the cruel verses he has accumulated in his *Epitaphe:*

Poète en dépit de ses vers . . .
Ses vers faux furent ses seuls vrais . . .
Trop réussi—comme raté.

Yet this failure, this toad, "nightingale of the mud" (the comparison is his own), was a veritable precursor. He introduced the accent of popular laments into serious poetry. His *Rose au rosier, dondaine!* and certain descriptive pieces in *Raccrocs*, here forestall Laforgue. The variety of the rhythms in *Gente Dame, Après la pluie, Toit, Cris d'aveugle, Pièce à Carreaux*, attest his virtuosity. *Rescousse* is a Verlainian harmony scarcely less liquid than the music of *Romances*

sans paroles. Where he is most original, his song keeps a raucous clumsiness the charm of which is penetrating, such as this finale of the *Heures:*

J'entends comme un bruit de crécelle . . .
C'est la male heure qui m'appelle
Dans le creux des nuits tombe: un glas . . . deux glas.
J'ai compté plus de quatorze heures . . .
L'heure est une larme. Tu pleures
Mon coeur! . . . Chante encor, va—ne compte pas.

Corbière is not a great poet; but the volume which contains, side by side with the powerful frescoes of *Amor* and the mysterious melodies of the *Sérénade des Sérénades,* the verses *A la mémoire de Zulma* where the juvenile verve is combined with melancholy humour, is sure to survive all revolutions of taste.

One would not dare predict as much for the *Chants de Maldoror* published by Isidore Ducasse under the pseudonym of Comte de Lautréamont before his death at the age of twenty-eight. From the first pages of this prose poem it is clear what influences still weigh upon the young man. He is drunk with sepulchral romanticism, with Young's funereal grandiloquence and pseudo-Ossian, with Byron's Satanism and that of the gloomiest novels. A furious thirst for originality still further exaggerates this puerilely Sadistic affectation. In a grotesque nature the Creator of which is ignoble, he contemplates strange visions. In rivers of blood, amid lice, vampires, hermaphrodites, pæderasts and spiders, the "brother of the leech" converses with the toad, apostrophizes Lohengrin, makes love with a female shark and, metamorphosed into an octopus, defies God. Sometimes ridiculous, these descriptions quickly enough become tediously monotonous. It is easy to understand why, in the sympathetic study devoted to him by Gourmont, the quotations do not go beyond the first canto. When he finds a fine formula ("I employ my genius in painting the delights of cruelty"), he hastens to dilute it with banal explanations. It is doubtful whether he merits even the praise with which he tempers his criticism of his hero: "Thy spirit is so sick thou dost not perceive it and thou thinkest thou art thine own self each time there issues from thy mouth speech insensate, though full of an infernal grandeur."

And then, by flashes, we perceive in this abortive work traces of a certain imaginative mastery. His grotesque lyricism breaks forth in apostrophes such as "*O poulpe au regard de soie*" and the long sustained invocation to old Ocean. His powerful enumerations revive in the mind the obsession of elementary monsters. High images arise:

"Appear then, derisory spans of eternal chastisements! . . . like a long flight of shivering storks, deeply meditating, which, during the winter, flies powerfully through space, all sails set . . ." His irony attains strange sonorities: "Thou hast a friend in the vampire. Counting the *acarus sarcopte* that produces the itch, thou wilt have two friends." He suddenly transports himself to the end of the world where "the granite will be seen to glide, like a cormorant, on the surface of the waves." With Lautréamont we penetrate into a realm of uncertain lights. "As I write," he says, "new thrills pervade the intellectual atmosphere. All it needs is to have the courage to look them in the face." Was he conscious of so doing in these enigmatic phrases where there is perhaps genius: "I, like the dogs, feel the need of the infinite . . . I cannot, cannot satisfy this need! I am the son of man and of woman, according to what I have been told. This astonishes me . . . I believed I was something more!"

There is nothing of this violent originality in Jules Laforgue. No doubt he has excited ardent admiration. "I quite believe," wrote Théodor de Wyzewa, "that, among all the young artists of his generation, Laforgue alone had genius" and Francis Viélé-Griffin has spoken of "a generation which Jules Laforgue will immortalize." It seems clear, however, that his work has benefited by the pity which the person of the consumptive poet who died at the age of twenty-seven could not fail to arouse. Of the twofold judgment pronounced by Rémy de Gourmont, "adolescent genius . . . over-petted little girl," we should to-day be tempted to retain above all the second affirmation. An example will show exactly enough the gulf between Laforgue and a great poet. Baudelaire having written:

Ah! Seigneur, donnez-moi la force et le courage . . .

Laforgue rewrites this verse thus:

O! Nature, donne-moi la force et le courage. . . .

A good part of his originality consists in having thus made beautiful French verses limp.

Reduced to its real measure, it is possible to appreciate the merit of the *Complaintes* or of the *Fleurs de bonne volonté* and accord a charm to these improvisations. Laforgue excels in the rapid evocation of successive visions, in the "five-minute water-colours," in the "little pieces without pretension" as well as in the rhapsodies (*L'Hiver qui vient*, *Dimanches*) where the desultory rules, in the stringing of images along a rather loose thought (*Pétition*). There his qualities manifest

themselves: a gruesome humour (*De l'oubli des morts*) shaded with a pert melancholy:

Je n'aurai jamais d'aventures;
Qu'il est petit, dans la Nature,
Le chemin d'fer Paris-Ceinture!

and mirthless smiles:

Il dit que la Terre est une simple légende
Contée au possible par l'idéal . . .
. . . . . .
J'aurai passé ma vie à faillir m'embarquer
Dans de bien funestes histoires.

From time to time this familiar inspiration finds an expressive formula:

Ah! que la Vie est quotidienne!

or even cruelly just:

Et c'est bien dans ce sens, moi, qu'au lieu de me taire,
Je persiste à narrer mes petites affaires.

He tries hard to shake it off in the longest poems but it is to fall into the insipid prating of *L'Imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune* and of *Le Concile féérique.* In vain he knocks at every door. He translates the spleen of an exasperated Romanticism then, in reaction, parodies it (*Complainte-placet de Faust fils*); but the pirouettes, the sneers, the slang, the fabrication of comic *éternullités* or *violuptés* could not long inspire an artist.

He is the bard of abortive things, of the barrel-organ, of painful puberties, of the fœtuses of poets, of the blackballed, of the poor human body, of the desolate resignation which concludes:

Et jusqu'à ce que la nature soit bien bonne
Tachons de vivre monotone.

This monotony weighs heavily upon the *Moralités légendaires,* upon the *Lohengrin* whose easy symbolism limits itself to diluting a great utterance of Rimbauld's on *Pan et la Syrinx* who flees shouting the *hoyotoho* of the Walkyrie. It is this confusion of styles and of epochs that charmed contemporaries. They relished that, in *Persée et Andromède,* the happiest of the three should be the monster. Why dissemble how much these parodies to-day appear factitious and mechanical? For example the apostrophe to Iokanaan: "There thou art, ideologist,

scribbler, rejected conscript, bastard of Jean-Jacques Rousseau," makes those alone laugh who have agreed with the author in advance to find it funny. The best of these prose pieces is that which, like the introduction to the *Miracle des Roses*, even when worked up, keeps an appearance of spontaneity, with humorous sallies in the parentheses and the sly adverbs.

There again the most ambitious attempt leads to the gravest failure. One is astonished at the prestige the Hamlet of the *Moralités* once had. Did he really pretend to draw his own portrait in that puppet of an ironical dauber? Must we also exclaim over Laforgue's profound philosophical culture because he knew the opposition between *natura naturans* and *natura naturanda*, because he wrote: "It is I [Hamlet] who go dethroning the Categorical Imperative and installing in its place the Climacteric Imperative"? Happy quip, at best, scarcely superior to this other: "Hamlet takes his future skull in both hands and tries to quake with all his bones." Laforgue's aim is clearly perceived. He has defined it in *Les Deux Pigeons:* "Gaspard knew everything, the philosophies and history, the moral sciences and the paradoxes. He was skilful at mingling everything in his fireside ideal." There has been talk in this connection of a French Heine. Why did Laforgue often adorn himself with the Germanic heaviness from which the German had escaped?

Seeking to situate him in the Symbolist movement, Ernest Raynaud writes: "Laforgue floats between the punctilious, meticulous Bourget who tries to keep him within the bounds of Parnassian duty, and the speculative Gustave Kahn . . . who urges him on to adventures." It is not astonishing that he has remained the idol of mediocre journalists who learned from his example that ignoble disparagement could take the place of poetic gift.

3. ARTHUR RIMBAUD

Jean-Arthur Rimbaud was born in 1854. In 1870, at the College of Charlesville, he wrote poems certain of which already denote a great lyric poet. Before he was nineteen he had produced *Les Illuminations*, he had published, then attempted to destroy *La Saison en Enfer* and forever renounced literature. Thenceforth his life was that of a voluntary exile wandering through the world. He was living in Africa when, in 1884, Verlaine published his *Poètes maudits*. The new school hailed him as a precursor though, to tell the truth, he represented for it but a name and the ideal type of the young Decadent prince. False sonnets by Rimbaud were published. They were not even pastiches since his work was unknown (*Les Illuminations* appeared in 1886 only

and a second edition of *La Saison* had to be awaited until 1892); but they show how his contemporaries pictured him, a romantic poet who had become a chief of negro tribes. He returned to France only to die there (1891). Now, Jacques Rivière, speaking of Rimbaud in 1920, writes: "It would not be hard for me, at times, to revere in him the greatest poet who ever existed." [1] While the influence of all the Symbolists, save Mallarmé, seems exhausted to-day, no one can forsee how far that of Rimbaud, poet and seer of genius, will extend.

This prodigious career in which Rimbaud travelled in three years the road of a long existence, this literary life of which Georges Duhamel wrote that it was "like a violent epitome of the history of literatures," falls readily into three periods. To measure the suddenness of his outburst it is indispensable to recall, on the threshold of this study, that at seventeen he was sufficiently master of his art to unite the grace of:

Elle était fort déshabillée
Et de grands arbres indiscrets
Aux vitres jetaient leur feuillée
Malinement, tout près, tout près . . .
(*Première Soirée*)

the penetrating emotion of:

Je ne parlerai pas, je ne penserai rien:
Mais l'amour infini me montera dans l'âme,
Et j'irai loin, bien loin, comme un bohémien,
Par la Nature—heureux comme avec une femme . . .
(*Sensation*)

and the perfect vision and suggestion of:

Il écoute chanter leurs haleines craintives
Qui fleurent de longs miels végétaux et rosés
Et qu'interrompt parfois un sifflement, salives
Reprises sur la lèvre ou désirs de baisers . . .
(*Les Chercheuses de Poux*).

From his first words he manifests that terrible distinctness which will illuminate *La Saison en Enfer*. It is true he has visibly undergone influences. His form bears traces of Romanticism and of *Le Parnasse*. It is often antithetical or marmorean by imitation. There is literary Satanism in *Venus Anadyomène*, there are memories of Banville and Gautier in *Le Bal des pendus*, even of Musset in *Ophélia;* but how

[1] The studies by Paul Claudel and Jacques Rivière are as indispensable for the understanding of Rimbaud as the books by Paterne Berrichon and Ernest Delahaye.

quickly his originality frees itself from these artifices! If Hugo is not absent from *Le Forgeron*, it is because his sonorous verse marvellously expresses Rimbaud's popular and revolutionary aspirations. This virulent picture:

Et l'un avec la hart, l'autre avec la cravache
Nous fouaillaient . . .

expresses his revolt, as does also the sharp satire of *Les Assis* and *Les Premières Communions*. Rimbaud is a rebel even against his first faith. *Soleil et Chair* mingles its humanitarian Rousseauism and the poetical paganism which curses the debasement of beauty by Christianity.

Besides the poems which keep but a plastic value, such as *Le Dormeur du Val*, he discovers a new tone for intimate poems: immortalized sensations (*Rêve pour l'hiver*, *La Maline*, *Le Buffet*), fugitive fantasies (*Ma Bohême*, *Oraison du Soir*). He mingles realism and humour (*Les Réparties de Nina*). Through the omnipotence of rhythm he gives inflexible description a halo of tender pity (*Les Effarés*). In *A la Musique*, after six stanzas of an almost photographic precision, he evokes in twelve verses all the confused aspirations of puberty. In *Au Cabaret Vert* the poetry transfigures with a sovereign power:

. . . La chope immense, avec sa mousse
Que dorait un rayon de soleil arriéré . . .

The reader already recognizes the first accents of the music, elusive and so simple, of the songs in *Les Illuminations*. They strip the buffoon vein of *Le Cœur volé* of all grossness. Nothing any longer disguises them in this conclusion of *Tête de Faune:*

Et quand il a fui—tel qu'un écureuil—
Son rire tremble encore à chaque feuille,
Et l'on voit épeuré par un bouvreuil,
Le Baiser d'or du Bois qui se recueille.

We have in fact reached the point of transition, the labor described by Rimbaud in his *Alchimie du verbe:* "I ordered the form and the movement of each consonant and, with instinctive rhythms, I flattered myself I had invented a poetic speech accessible, one day or another, to all the senses"—a grandiose enterprise of which the famous sonnet, *Les Voyelles*, is but one of the essays: "I thought I saw, at times I thought I felt in this manner," he declared, "and I say it, I tell it, because I find this as interesting as anything else." Lemaître's irony proves nothing here but the extent of his non-comprehension and the lucid boldness of the precursor. When Verlaine will admire in *Les*

Effarés "worse and better Goya" and in *Les Chercheuses de poux* "a Lamartinian, Racinian, Virgilian" poem, Rimbaud himself will already have felt the inadequacy of his first verses in spite of "their unheard-of strength and stiffness" (Claudel). He will dream of awakening a more subtle, more fiercely suave music. In May 1871 he writes to a friend: "I say one must be a *visionary*, make oneself a *visionary*," exactly like the child he had described in his *Poétes de sept ans:*

. . . Qui dans ses yeux fermés voyait des points . . .
. . . Et pour des visions écrasant son œil darne . . .

Making oneself a visionary means furthermore mastering one's eye, cultivating one's soul in order to attain the unknown: "The poet reaches the unknown; and even, demented, should he end by losing the intelligence of his visions, he has had them." The poet, stealer of fire, will put at the disposal of this vision a language which "will be soul for the soul, summing up everything, perfumes, sounds, colours, thought locking thought and dragging." For forty years French poetry has been evolving in the direction which Rimbaud, logically prolonging the Baudelairian presentiments, had indicated in these two prophetic sentences.

He had written to Verlaine. The latter, enthusiastic, invited him to come to Paris. Rimbaud ran. He brought *Bateau Ivre*, an authentic masterpiece in which the Parnassian Mendès saw merely "a drawn-out metaphor" and which was, in reality, the crowning of the past, the announcement of a flight towards the unknown. For if those of his contemporaries who welcomed this revelation were especially sensitive to the plenitude of its descriptions, a completer knowledge of Rimbaud's thought adds to it for us the spectacle of this visionary he wished to be alternately triumphant, faltering, finally despairing in the terrible knowledge of the price his conquest had cost him.

He did not, however, entirely abandon "the empire of splendid strength" (Verlaine). *Les Illuminations* still contains traces of violence, of *vertigo*. At least he will try henceforth to elude the common fatality, first through flashing vision, later by the return to silent humility. *Les Illuminations* and *La Saison en Enfer* will be the two stages of this progress which was to lead him farther than any of his predecessors in literary expression and finally—calm after this vertigo—outside all literature.

Les illuminations are, expressly, images. "Coloured plates," he said disdainfully, in English, and certain of them (*Promontoire*, *Scènes*, *Antique*) do indeed remain coloured images; but most often they justify the French sense of the word (*images coloriées*) and are the thrilling

evocations of a visionary. As early as 1871, in *Les Déserts de l'Amour*, he gave an example of those characteristic impressions where, before the troubled mind, "moved to death by the murmur of the morning milk and the night of the last century," objects were infinitely distorted: "The partition became vaguely the shadow of the trees, and I was swallowed up in the amorous sadness of the night." He himself has defined his manner: "I wrote silences, nights, I noted the inexpressible. I transfixed vertigoes."

"I became a fabulous opera," he continues. In fact, his soul frequently seems a stage cleared for chimerical processions. In *Après le Déluge* the worlds violently break loose. *Nocturne vulgaire* and *Départ* are mysterious glidings from one image to another. *Jeune Ménage* and *Mémoire* are thus constituted by long trails of images, the slow eddies of a wave. No longer any form, properly speaking, nothing but the translation of these movements:

> *Madame se tient trop debout dans la prairie*
> *prochaine où neigent les fils du travail; l'ombrelle*
> *aux doigts; foulant l'ombelle; trop fière pour elle*
> *des enfants lisant dans la verdure fleurie*
> *leur livre de maroquin rouge! . . .*

Matinée d'ivresse, *Veillées* and that *Aube* in which he cannot quite succeed in grasping his object are pure hallucinations. In *Enfance* and *Villes* his memories of Charleville, Paris and London pass before his eyes with a feverish haste distorting past and future: "It can only be the end of the world as you go forward." *Soifs* represents him also disarmed before his lassitude and his desires. In this receptive state he accepts as easily the complexity of *La Rivière de Cassis* (where a fixed landscape suggests in him other landscapes less firmly caught) as the simplicity of *La Bonne Pensée du matin* or the popular refrain of *Les Fêtes de la Faim*.

His lucidity, however, does not disarm. Jacques Rivière has perfectly analysed the return of certain motives in his visions: disorganization of the known world by the intervention of another universe, return to chaos, importance of boundaries, motive of the crevice (which perhaps expresses the experience of an obstacle, so frequent in dreams) with ever the "inevitable descent from the sky." It is proper then to insist upon the force of the objective vision in the precision of the portraits (Pan in *Antique*), of the setting (*Scènes*) of the landscape ("on the right . . . ," "the left bank" in *Ornières*); but care must be taken not to exaggerate Rimbaud's passivity. His artistic will manifests itself fully in the large images which unfold at the end of *Mystique*

(a masterpiece of construction and of suggestion) or in these last lines of *Fleurs:* "Like unto a god with enormous blue eyes and snowy forms, sea and earth attract the throng of young, strong roses towards the marble terraces." The writer who pretended to "order the form and the movement of each consonant and, with instinctive rhythms, to invent a poetic speech," is found again in the ineffable music of *Larme:*

L'eau des bois se perdait sur les sables vierges,
Le vent de Dieu jetait des glaçons aux mares,
Et tel qu'un pêcheur d'or et de coquillages,
Dire que je n'ai pas eu le souci de boire!

Characteristically his are the abrupt returns of lucid humour: "The pavilion of bloody meat on the silk of the seas and of the arctic flowers (they do not exist) . . ." (*Barbare*), as well as the noisy cries of "for sale" in *Solde.* Nothing is more personal to Rimbaud than the sudden passage from concrete to abstract: "I think of a war, of right or of force, of quite unforeseen logic. It is as simple as a musical phrase" (*Guerre*), denoting a thought which does not abdicate. For, should it be absolutely necessary to go to an extreme, it would be truer to assert that he never gives in, that in *Les Illuminations* as in his wanderings with Verlaine, he remains, as he has written, "in haste to find the place and the formula."

He is inaccessible to sentimental lacerations; but an intellectual crisis torments him. Literature was for him merely a means of self-expression. At the first stroke he caught up with his elders—surpassed them even. The regular verse no longer sufficing the visions of *Marine* and of *Mouvement,* he created the verse paragraph (*verset*) in which the scope of the voice forms the sole unity. The prose *A une raison* forms an introduction to all contemporary art: "A stroke of your finger on the drum discharges all the sounds and begins the new harmony . . . Arrived from always, you will leave everywhere." He did not want to linger however. This work was but preliminary: "You are still at the stage of Anthony's temptation." He had to express himself elsewhere, in terms of life. Beneath the symbols he cleared his way, through *Conte, Fairy, Being Beauteous,* to reach the conclusion of *Royauté:* "They were kings all one morning, when carmine hangings were draped on the houses, and all the afternoon, when they advanced skirting the palm gardens."

He had understood the danger of this spiritual royalty: "I end by finding the disorder of my spirit sacred." His strong classical culture and the memories of his religious education rebelled equally at the

idea he might become the docile victim of his own illuminations. The mysterious "I could not continue, it was wrong" heard on his death-bed, was perhaps but a supreme justification of his inflexible insurgent reason. Preoccupied exclusively with "saying good-bye to the world in species of love-songs," he gave the most poignantly simple accent to the four poems he intended to unite under the title of *Fêtes de la Patience.* The cycle of pride in entranced creation and of detachment was closing. He could conclude: "I have brewed my blood. My duty is remitted. I must no longer even think of that. I am really of the Beyond, and no commissions."

Proud enough to deem himself accountable to no one for his evolution, Rimbaud was too lucid not to exact of himself the complete account of that extraordinary escape: "I have dreamed of seeking the key to the ancient festal . . . I detach for you these few hideous leaves from my note-book of a soul in hell." He might have repeated from it what he wrote as an introduction to *Déserts de l'Amour:* "Sweet religious considerations arise from them perhaps." *La Saison en Enfer* indicates his return to Christianity; but it is important to remark he had never been extremely far from it, the revolutionary faith which made him write *Mort à Dieu!* on the public benches of Charleville, being merely a transposition. It must above all be noted that he was separated from it by none of the ordinary obstacles, "not having loved women—although full-blooded" and being persuaded that "love is to be reinvented"; but rather by a strange sentiment of which *La Saison* will yield us the secret. For this book is less the account of the conversion of one lukewarm in his observances than the story of the prodigious turning of an entire being against himself.

Let us follow him on his rough road. "We go to the Spirit," he proclaims in *Mauvais Sang.* Such at the outset is his one conviction. The conflict begins: "The pagan blood returns." He wants to flee: "My day is done. I am leaving Europe . . . I will return . . . I shall have gold . . . Saved!" Alas! "Not leaving." He remains prey to confused appeals: "*De profundis, Domine.* What an ass I am!" He struggles; then: "I have received in my heart the gift of grace." He rebels, tries to show that, by nature, he is not subject to this grace, that he escapes its laws. Impossible: "Life is the farce to be played by all . . . Forward!" And it is Hell, described in *Nuit de l'Enfer* and *Délires.* He emerges at last: "I saw the consoling Christ arise." The struggle begins again. He opposes Orient to Occident, turns towards the past and "Eden." Illusion. It is in the future he will find the purity to which he aspires: "It is this minute of awaken-

ing that has given me the vision of purity! By the spirit we go to God!" Confronted with his duty, a last revolt: "I! I who have called myself magus or angel, exempt from all morality, I am given back to the soil with a duty to seek and a rugged reality to grasp. Peasant!" He will, however, have the courage "to cut the poetry from his living flesh" (Mallarmé). Paradisiac apparitions are his reward; and here is the end: "I shall be permitted to possess truth in a soul and a body." *La Saison* stops here. Henceforth Rimbaud did nothing else, according to his old presentiment, than "conduct himself to death as to a terrible, fatal modesty."

Such is this breathless drama. All Rimbaud's soul is revealed there, in flashes blinding for the first glance: "I, I am intact, and I don't care. I have ever been of an inferior race . . . I am of a race inferior for all eternity . . . I remember no further than this earth and Christianity." If he was a criminal it was, he says, "at an immemorial epoch." His silence is as enigmatic as his stormy outbursts: "I understand and, not knowing how to explain myself without pagan words, I should like to remain silent." What does he mean by this? Literally, that he is not of this earth, that he does not belong to our universe, that he remains irreducible to our measures: "Orgy and the comradeship of women were forbidden me . . . I have never been of these people, I have never been a Christian." His friend Verlaine had called him "an angel in exile." Jacques Rivière's minute analysis confirms this poetical intuition. Rimbaud is "unmanageable . . . I am a beast, a Negro." He is anterior to the notion of sin. Why speak to him of redemption? But "the white men land." He is baptized by force and treacherously stricken with grace: "Ah! I had not foreseen it!" However, he revolts against the humiliation of this easy salvation when "the clock will not have reached the point of no longer striking any hour but that of pure suffering." He bears in himself a more superhuman ideal: "Let us appreciate without vertigo the extent of my innocence." He demands "liberty in salvation." Now a degradation has been forced upon him: "I am the slave of my baptism." He was anterior to all pollution and "hell cannot attack the pagans." He suffers nevertheless all the anguish of hell. He is in hell, because he is far from heaven, because he is in the world: "I am no longer in the world . . . decidedly we are out of the world . . . Real life is absent, we are not in the world." Earth is his hell, the earth is not "the world," that sinless world which is that of the angels, "of the sons of the Sun" of whom he is one. This unheard-of originality which explains all that is inhuman in his genius, this sense of being incomparably different from other men, was the last thing he had to

kill in himself: "I have created all the feasts, all the triumphs, all the dramas. I have tried to invent new flowers, new stars, new flesh, new tongues. I have thought to acquire supernatural powers. Well! I must bury my imagination and my memories! A fine fame as artist and story-teller borne away.

Did he really bear it away into his retirement? Is not *La Saison en Enfer*, the autobiography which he attempted to destroy but which was manifestly first written for a reader, one of the masterpieces of French prose? "Diamond prose," said Verlaine, in which is manifested, adds Claudel, "the full mastery of his art." We here see all Rimbaud's qualities at his highest point. First his violence, with the abrupt intervals of harsh irony, the "how stupid it is! . . . Horror of my stupidity! . . . Queer mates!" which recall the bad temper of his intimate letters, with the deliberately coarse images ("I do not believe myself embarked for a marriage feast with Jesus Christ as a father-in-law"), with the paroxysms of abuse and mockery: "Marchand, you are a negro. Magistrate, you are a Negro. General, you are a Negro. Emperor, old itch, you are a Negro . . ." As in *Les Illuminations* the visions file by roads, cities, beaches, paradise. Everything becomes objective. He howls: "Where are we going? To the fight? I am weak! The others advance. Tools, arms . . . Time! . . . Fire! Fire on me! There! or I surrender. Cowards! I kill myself! I throw myself under the horses' hoofs! . . . Ah! . . ." The lyrical exaltation ends in frenzy: "Hunger, thirst, cries, dance, dance, dance, dance!"

But, just as his brutality among men masked a subtle simplicity, so does his art shed this appearance of pure violence. The conflicts he depicts have not always the bitterness of *Mauvais Sang*. He has given us a double portrait of himself, directly in *Alchimie du verbe*, indirectly in the account of the foolish virgin who could not understand this being charged "with a mission of bewilderment" (Rivière). What unforgettable images he found to express these spiritual struggles: "In the morning I had so lost a look and so dead a countenance that those I met did not perhaps see me . . . I was in his soul as in a palace which has been emptied so that a person as little noble as you shall not be seen there"; and, the better to evoke them, what strains as yet unheard: "Beside his dear sleeping body, how many hours of the night have I kept watch, seeking why he wanted so much to escape from reality. The spiritual combat is as brutal as the human battle; but the vision of justice is the pleasure of God alone."

Finally, higher still than these grave harmonies, sits enthroned a flawless intelligence which "had the pity of a mother unkind to little

children." Among the phantoms where others would founder, Rimbaud keeps his precision: "I became accustomed to simple hallucination . . . Then I explained my magic sophisms with the hallucination of words." Nothing disarms his clear-sightedness: "I made him promise he would not let me go. He made this lover's promise twenty times. It was as vain as my saying to him: 'I understand you.'" Let those who might be tempted to believe in his unconsciousness compare with the first sketch the definitive density of these sentences: "I became a fabulous opera. I saw that all beings have a fatality of happiness. Action is not life, but a way of making a mess of something, an enervation. Morality is cerebral weakness." And let them measure the poignant art of his supreme simplicity: "That is past. I can to-day salute beauty."

"Saluting beauty" is easy. Determining its influence is less convenient. Gourmont deemed it null. He said so, even repeating it in Latin for greater certainty: "This boy of genius . . . was a freak of nature, *lusus naturæ* . . . These fragments were published too late to have a real literary influence." Such was by no means the opinion of Verlaine who spoke from experience, and Paul Claudel has proclaimed his debt to Rimbaud. At the beginning of his whimsical *Anicet*, Louis Aragon chose Rimbaud as the symbol of a state of mind which the youth of 1920 refused to understand. Even should it suffer momentary eclipses in public favour, Rimbaud's work is none the less certain to find, in each generation, fervent readers; and it will surely be for them, as he himself had dreamed, "soul for the soul, thought locking thought and dragging."

4. PAUL VERLAINE

Paul Verlaine's agitated life has been often and minutely told.[1] We shall retain nothing of it here but what will aid us more clearly to understand the development of his work—it being thoroughly understood, however, that we shall seek there general indications only, since, in arranging his collected works, Verlaine was concerned with the artistic effect rather than with chronological sequence or psychological unity.

His first book, *Les Poèmes saturniens* (1866), indicates, in addition to more or less accidental Parnassian influences, the intimate masters from whom he derived, Sainte-Beuve and Baudelaire. Yet already are heard in it the accents of the voice which, for the future, will be the voice of Verlaine. Three years later *Les Fêtes galantes*, inspired

[1] See, notably, the books by his friends, Edmund Lepelletier and Ernest Delahaye. Consult also his *Correspondance* published, with notes, by Ad. Van Bever.

by reading the Goncourts and looking at Watteau, offered his readers a deliciously rouged and powdered Verlaine. He appears without a mask in *La Bonne Chanson* (1870), a "flower in a bombshell," as Hugo called it, which celebrates his engagement and marriage at the beginning of the war—"in the fairly voluminous baggage of my verse, the one which I should prefer as sincere *par excellence*," he wrote later. Then came the great sentimental and intellectual crisis, the collapse of his conjugal happiness, the jealous break with Rimbaud culminating in the tragi-comedy at Brussels (July, 1873). During his imprisonment his friend Lepelletier printed the *Romances sans paroles* which did not suffice to bring Paul Verlaine's name to the attention of the public. The human ordeal led him back to God and, in 1881, he published the Christian collection, *Sagesse*, the first "public act of faith" of this "submissive son of the Church" whose ambition then was to produce nothing that could shock "the delicacy of any Catholic ear."

Sagesse passed almost unnoticed; but Verlaine, turn by turn functionary, vagabond, professor and farmer, devoted himself thenceforth to literature. He began *Les Poètes maudits*, freed himself from the *ægri somnia of Jadis et Naguère* and published that *Art Poétique* which caused him to be consecrated *chef d'école.* One after another fresh misfortunes befell him: the disaster of a second agricultural enterprise, the death of his mother and of his adopted son, Lucien Létinois. *Amour* is the response of his Christian soul to these repeated sorrows. He came back to Paris where he was to lead, ten years longer, a wretched yet glorious existence, going from café to hovel and to hospital, while the "*jeunes*" hailed in him the Prince of Poets. To remain quite faithful to himself, he had the idea, as he said, "of inaugurating a system based upon the famous *homo duplex*," and of "giving each of his Catholic volumes a more worldly counterpart": *Jadis et Naguère* after *Sagesse*, *Parallèlement* after *Amour*, *Chansons pour elle* after *Bonheur*, *Odes en son honneur* after *Liturgies intimes.* This alternation is due less to a system than to the need of interpreting the amazing mixture of artless faith and of eroticism whetted by the intemperance which made of this Bohemian genius our modern Villon.

Paul Verlaine was a very great poet. His originality comes out more clearly when the chaff has been winnowed from his work. There are far too many imitations in *Les Poèmes saturniens.* Some are successful, such as the Parnassian *Effet de Nuit* or the Baudelairian *Sérénade;* but the lingering trace of conventional romanticism in the *Nocturne parisien* spoils its modern inspiration and *Çavitri* is but bargain-counter Leconte de Lisle. *Jadis et Naguère* contains, in ad-

dition to the fine poems of *Cellulairement*, many beginners' essays, while the imitations are not limited to the section entitled "*à la manière de plusieurs.*" When Verlaine wrote the line:

Dans une obsession de musc et de benjoin,

he remembered Baudelaire and invented nothing. *Crimen Amoris* in which he paints Rimbaud, "the fairest of all these fallen angels," touches the psychologist more than the lover of poetry who will prefer the works of the *grand damnés* themselves to this explanation. In *Amour*,

Ce mien livre, d'emoi cruel et de détresse,

we should gladly dispense with the series of friendly sonnets and that apology for the patriotic folderol (*Gais et Contents*) of an easily exalted native of Metz. The last volumes contain an enormous amount of garrulousness, whether parodies on poems "in the manner of Paul Verlaine" or interminable sermons in which the poet settles his little personal affairs with heaven. All this, which is tedious enough, is still less so perhaps than, in the "sinner" collections, the monotony with which he preaches

L'embarquement pour Sodome et Gomorrhe
(*Parallèlement*).

The somewhat Baudelairian sonnets on *Les Amies* may still pass muster; but it is hard not to feel a touch of nausea at the senile craving which inspires him with eternal descriptions of alcoves, of women's bodies, of chemises, of kitchen-wenches hunting their lice.

And yet even in the least successful of these volumes the reader will find the qualities which cause this poet to be forgiven everything: a lyrical spontaneity which once again reminds us of Villon, an impish candour in speaking of himself, the guileless excuses of a faun who would have liked to be a hermit and who avenges himself for his moral defeats by the artistic victories of *Réversibilités*, a masterpiece of clever construction, or of *Impression fausse* whose vague music haunts for ever ear and soul.

The ingenuous visage, pure in spite of all, which he thus unveils to us amid the ugliest blemishes and the most prosaic lapses, is the sole idea of the poet posterity should retain. The revolutionary novelty of his poetry lies in this spontaneity, this renunciation of every convention, the even simplicity of the confidential verses:

Le premier "oui" qui sort des lèvres bien-aimées . . .
L'atmosphère ambiante a des baisers de sœur . . .

It has been said he had the soul of a child. That is exact for the expression of his complete abandonment to woman—to the vigilant mother as well as to the mistress. One half of this *homo duplex* he owned to incarnating was so perfectly adapted to tranquil happiness, welcomed marriage so joyously. Warned "it was all right for once," he persuaded himself so quickly that they were going to begin again and that all would be well. He had such faith in his good resolutions:

Oui, je veux marcher droit et calme dans la Vie!
(*Bonne Chanson*)

—that life the spectacles of which inspired him with his incomparable elegies; and this same amorous abandonment to women and to life he brought, childlike, to the feet of the Virgin:

Je ne veux plus aimer que ma mère Marie. . . .

This simplicity is the only Christian virtue he dares fully lay claim to, if he opposes heart to heart:

Moi, le mien bat toujours le même,
Il est toujours simple . . . (*Amour*).

He would be humble:

Ma Foi, celle du charbonnier (*Amour*).
Le seul savant, c'est encore Moïse . . . (*Sagesse*).

Reacting against the pride of his contemporaries he attains in his confessions (*Conte*) a real humility, nor is his supreme prayer more feigned:

Priez avec et pour le pauvre Lélian.

His deliberately limited Catholicism caused him to write the unadorned songs of the *Liturgies intimes:*

La myrrhe, l'or et l'encens
Sont des présents moins aimables
Que de plus humbles présents
Offerts aux yeux adorables.

There is no affectation in the familiar debates with his conscience:

Ah! les autres, ah! toi! Crédule à qui te flatte,
Toi qui rêvais (*c'était trop excessif aussi*)
Je ne sais quelle mort légère et délicate,
Ah! toi, l'espèce d'ange avec ce vœu transi! (*Sagesse*)

or in the sharpness of his rebukes: "You are no longer good for anything decent . . ." Religion enlarges his horizon. He dreams of escaping from his age. He would like to have been born at the end of the seventeenth century. Then a sudden recall of obedience turns him from this:

Non! il fut Gallican, ce siècle, et Janséniste,

and he sees himself transported to the Middle Ages, to that portal of Chartres perhaps where Huysmans recognized him in Saint Jude. No doubt he is sometimes terribly didactic. His contrast between the Virgin and the statues of Hecuba and Niobe, symbolically pagan, is no more convincing than the graceless verses of *Circoncision;* but such excessive dryness is rare. As a rule he does not cease to be a poet to become a Christian. To the description of divine love he brings pagan details:

Et que votre plaisir, o Jésus, s'assouvisse . . . (*Bonheur*).

A moving human appeal brings him back to our earth:

Beauté des femmes, leur faiblesse, et ces mains pâles . . .
(*Sagesse*).

He keeps the art of restoring to soft feminine rhymes all their adorable music:

Ecoutez la chanson bien douce . . .
Un frisson d'eau sur de la mousse . . . (*Sagesse*).

When, for this poet of all the abandonments, sounds at last the hour for the supreme abandonment to divine love, nothing can equal the lyrical intensity of his prayer:

O mon Dieu, vous m'avez blessé d'amour . . .

and of the sonnet sequence: "*Mon Dieu m'a dit . . .*" which makes *Sagesse* an authentic masterpiece.

Now so much inspiration was not in vain. Divine love purified human love in his heart. This "irregular" was to celebrate the family with an emotional power infinitely greater than that of Hugo whose rhetoric always lays his sincerity open to suspicion. An irresistible emotion penetrates these poems. In *Amour* one should read the various poems on Lucien Létinois, those reminders of their walks, of their work, of their reading, of the child's laughter and his voice. One should listen to the litany of tender praises his father addresses him in order to measure the greatness of the poet who bowed before the celestial will:

Mon fils est mort. J'adore, O mon Dieu, votre loi . . .
Vous me l'aviez donné; vous me le reprenez:
Gloire à vous! . . .

Great poet of the soul, Verlaine remains one of our most refined artists as well. With his smiling ingenuousness is associated an extreme subtlety, a taste for unstable, ambiguous ties. As early as *Les Poèmes saturniens*, the *Chanson des Ingénues* hinted at this side of his talent. He reveals it at his ease in *Les Fêtes galantes*, images of an idealized eighteenth century. All the animation of Italian comedy lives again under our eyes (*Pantomime Colombine, Sur l'herbe*). The eternal *fantoches* bustle about set in motion by the whim of the poet whom it will often please thus to confuse the fine fancies. The personages who pass in this setting are scarcely more real. They tell the brevity of pleasure (*En Bateau, Le Faune*), with here and there a pretty libertine touch (*Cythère*), the intoxication of language (*A Clymène*, first title *Galimatias double*), exchange easy impertinences (*Lettre*) and, when the sticks of these rockets fall back to earth, they maintain, in their regrets, a spectral dignity (*Colloque sentimental*). He who animated them with his breath glides delicately over the transparent symbolism of things:

Le vent de l'autre nuit a jeté bas l'Amour . . .

He sings their transports in poems which are the scented underwoods of our literature (*A la promenade*). In twelve lines (*Clair de lune*), he sums up a world of picturesque "*Marivaudage*," bathed in an atmosphere of subtle melancholy and of unreality whence the lyricism springs in great fountains. He catches for ever their most perversely complex sentiments:

Le soir tombait, un soir équivoque d'automne;
Les belles se pendant rêveuses à nos bras
Dirent alors des mots si précieux, tout bas,
Que notre âme depuis ce temps tremble et s'étonne . . .
(*Les Ingénues*)

and his verses—miraculously—accord their rhythms with the stifled beating of their hearts:

Calmes dans le demi-jour
Que les branches hautes font,
Pénétrons bien notre amour
De ce silence profond . . . (*En Sourdine*).

"*Sagesse* is admirable," Mallarmé said to him in 1883; but . . . why should you not try to do some new *Fêtes Galantes?*"—amazing

lack of understanding of the artist who stops at the first artistic success! Verlaine was indeed to publish in *Jadis et Naguère* his comedy *Les Uns et les Autres* (written before 1870), in which the deep emotion is stemmed only by the voluntary nonchalance of an artificial civilization:

La vie est-elle une chose
Grave et réelle à ce point?

but he knew that the essence of his art lay elsewhere, that this "*Marivaudage*" lent a false air of spiritual distraction to a thought which found full satisfaction in pure music only. The musicians who, from Fauré to Debussy, have prolonged the echoes of his harmonies, have not been mistaken. Huysmans had forestalled them when he wrote: "Verlaine, alone, has been able to suggest certain disturbing beyonds of the soul, thoughts whispered so low, avowals so murmured, so interrupted, that the ear which perceived them remained hesitant." That Verlaine could fill the old *alexandrin* with virile oratorical energy as well as another, the sonnets to Louis II or to Victor Hugo would suffice to prove. It is none the less evident that the two fundamental precepts of his *Art poétique* are

Prends l'éloquence et tords-lui son cou!

and

De la musique avant toute chose.

The poem with him tends to become song. Music alone, indeed, can evoke the inexpressible (end of *Mon Rêve familier*), imitate the fluid meanders of revery (*Soleils couchants*, *Crépuscules du Soir mystique*), accept without reconstructive effort the sequence of impressions (the sonnet *L'Espoir luit*) and follow the caprice of an restless thought. Verlaine was conscious of owing his liberation to music. Through it he had freed himself from the literal descriptions of the Parnassians. Music had furnished him the means of evoking more subtly, by the sound as much as by the sense, the *Paysages belges* or this evening of *Sagesse:*

Le son du cor s'afflige vers les bois
D'une douleur on veut croire orpheline. . . .

It had yielded him the secret of the transposition of a picturesque vision like:

L'ombre des arbres dans la rivière embrumée
(*Romances sans paroles*)

in a sentimental image where a Debussy will in his turn find a pretext for a new correspondence. It had made him master of the troubled harmony of the *Vers pour être calomnié* as well as of the calm harmony of *Kaléidoscope* (*Jadis et Naguére*). He knew well enough that the most inexpressibly "Verlainian" of his poems were those subtly naïve songs:

Il pleure dans mon cœur . . . (*Ariettes oubliées*);

Je suis venu, calme orphelin . . . (*Sagesse*);

those indefinable recitatives as if of a presence half dreamed:

Dans l'interminable
Ennui de la plaine . . . (*Romances sans paroles*);

those airs which seem to be born after a long waiting and suddenly to gush straight forth, without a break in their melodic line:

O triste, triste était mon âme
(*Romances sans paroles*);
J'ai peur d'un baiser . . . (*id*);

those poems of sheer music finally which now haunt every memory, like the most fraternal utterances of the human soul:

Les sanglots longs
Des violons . . . (*Poèmes saturniens*);

La lune blanche

Luit dans les bois . . . (*Bonne Chanson*);
Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville . . .
(*Romances sans paroles*);

Le ciel est par-dessus le toit
Si bleu, si calme . . . (*Sagesse*).

Creator of music so perfect and so altogether original, Verlaine avoided the temptation offered by those who invited him to burden them with a theoretical commentary. He consented to call himself a Decadent because the epithet pleased him; but, if Symbolist has a meaning, he, so limpid, was one far less than Rimbaud. In his *Art poétique*, beyond his hatred of eloquence and his love of music, he expresses his tenderness for the *nuance:*

Pas la couleur, rien que la nuance

and for

. . . la chanson grise
Où l'Indécis au Précis se joint,

in which he does little more than learnedly generalize his instinctive preferences; for he did not believe in tricks:

Que ton vers soit la bonne aventure . . .
Et tout le reste est littérature.

His most precious glory is that so many poems, until then deemed estimable, now appear "literature," when we think of his which were so absolutely

De la musique encore et toujours.

5. Stéphane Mallarmé

In his preface (1920) to a volume of verse,[1] Paul Valéry—who was Mallarmé's friend and the witness of his last evolution—has given us a Symbolist self-examination: "What was baptized *Symbolism* is summed up very simply in the intention common to several families of poets (enemies moreover among themselves), 'to get back from Music what belonged to them.' . . . We were brought up on music, and our literary heads dreamed only of deriving from language almost the same effects which purely sonorous causes produced upon our nervous system." That Mallarmé was fully conscious of this orientation and was in such a sense *chef d'école,* his own declarations bear witness: "A musical concern dominates and I shall interpret it in the widest sense possible: Symbolist, Decadent, or Mystic, the Schools . . . adopt as their meeting-place the point of an Idealism which (as in the case of fugues, of sonatas) refuses natural materials and, as brutal, a direct thought ordering them. To keep of anything but the suggestion."

Here, however, we are already arrested by one of the antitheses which form his literary visage.[2] This musician had made his début in *Le Parnasse* and never entirely forgot it. Gourmont has recalled the tradition according to which Baudelaire, on reading Mallarmé's first poems, was disturbed at seeing his successor start up so quickly. *Brise marine* does, indeed, enclose between its opening:

[1] *Connaissance de la Déesse,* by Lucien Fabre.

[2] Every reflection on Mallarmé should, to-day, begin with a tribute to *La Poésie de Stéphane Mallarmé,* a literary study by Albert Thibaudet.

La chair est triste, hélas! et j'ai lu tous les livres,

and its conclusion:

Mais, ô mon cœur, entends le chant des matelots!

an authentically Baudelairian meditation. *Le Sonneur*, *Angoisse* and *Le Guignon* are not less Baudelairian in theme and in accent. The school of art for art's sake has produced nothing more minutely finished than the delicate Chinese invocation in *Las de l'amer repos.* Long before there had been any question of Symbolism, *Le Parnasse* had taught the poet of *Les Fenêtres* the use of symbols. He himself has, among the tendencies of *Le Parnasse*, noted "an adoration for the property of words." For a Parnassian, words are precious stones. They shine with all their brilliance, distinct, exactly as Mallarmé was to see them in *Prose pour Des Esseintes*, as he was to use them in the beautiful Parnassian verses of that *Hérodiade* which is transitional between *Salammbô* and Gide's and Valéry's *Narcisse.* No doubt the Parnassian inheritance leads him at times to Delille's periphrase—witness this evocation of Poe's cocktail:

Dans le flot sans honneur de quelque noir mélange.

Perhaps he owed it also his interest in the material representation of thought—books, posters, punctuation, typographic details. Certainly he retains its taste for visual images sometimes in violent collision with the motor images suggested to him by music (beginning of *La Chevelure vol d'une flamme*)—a conflict he tries to reconcile in poetic ballet figures. This pictorial art was to obsess him up to the moment of his greatest obscurity. He devotes a whole sonnet (*Surgi de la croupe et du bond*) to the description of a vase without flowers. *Victorieusement fui le suicide beau* is a Parnassian sonnet transcribed afterwards into "Mallarmé." The two tercets of *Tout orgueil* paint in the two languages the same console bearing the same marble:

Affres du passé nécessaires
Agrippant comme avec des serres
Le sépulcre de désaveu,
Sous un marbre lourd qu'elle isole
Ne s'allume pas d'autre feu
Que la fulgurante console.

Mallarmé never repudiated *Le Parnasse.* If he speaks, in 1890, of "that signboard, now somewhat rusty," he adds that "at any rate the Parnassian prudence does not remain useless." It is as an enthusiastic Parnassian that, arriving at Oxford, he delivered himself, on the first

occasion, of this incredible piece of news: "Verse has been tampered with!" He approved—sometimes employing the octosyllabic verse—"a sort of five-finger exercise on" the *alexandrin*, allowing free verse among the innovators—but he concluded: "I maintain that the reminiscences of strict versification haunt these by-plays and are profitable to them." His Parnassian austerity has well deserved Gourmont's praise: "Never, contrary to the uneven Verlaine, did he write at random."

He himself, however, denounced the Parnassian illusion, "the pretension of confining the objective material in the expression." Music enlightened him definitely on this point and perhaps he failed to understand the necessity of diverse metrical systems simply because "every soul is a melody which has to be renewed." His real acquaintance with music came fairly late, during the last ten or twelve years of his life. Then he met Wagner—dread god who sometimes overwhelmed him and made him doubt literature. Dying too soon for Debussy to cure him of Wagner, this obsession was a source of error for him. It reconciled him—little objective as he was, incapable of sustaining a dialogue between Hérodiade and her nurse—to the idea of a theatre or at least (for his mistrust of "the monster who cannot be" denounced to the end "the allied error, stable setting and real actor, of the Drama without Music") with the possibility of those theatrical services of which a high mass and *Parsifal* seemed to him to offer the first realizations. It made him take his sonata, *Le Coup de Dès*, for a symphony. In return, it inspired him with the vision of an exchange between the two arts ("several means are found which, having seemed to me to belong to letters, I take over again") and of a common origin ("Music and Letters are the alternative face here widened out towards the obscure; scintillant there, with certainty, of a phenomenon, the only one, I called it the Idea"). In their conscious reconciliation he saw the hope of a regenerated poetry: "Verse is going to be moved with some swaying, terrible and sauve, like the orchestra, wing spread; but with talons rooted in you." He seeks consequently "an art of completing the transposition, in the book, of the symphony or simply of taking back what belongs to us."

Long meditations reinforced, moreover, this theoretical discovery. He had always strewn his poems with admirable isolated verses; but, in the last works, this seeking after musical effects becomes primordial. It leads to a very learned art excluding spontaneity. All the possibilities of the language have been studied for the effective utilization of words like:

L'Angoisse, ce minuit soutient, lampadophore . . .
De scintillations sitôt le septuor . . .

and of such lines as:

Aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore . . .
Victorieusement fui le suicide beau . . .

which justify his original analysis: "The verse which, of several vocables, remakes a total word, new, foreign to the language and, as it were, incantational." Fruits of long musical patience, the sonnet in *i* major, *Le Vierge, le Vivace et le Bel Aujourd'hui*, or this triplet of light and shade:

Mais chez qui du rêve se dore
Tristement dort une mandore
Au creux néant musicien.

In this field Mallarmé has obtained incomparable successes, triumphs of suggestion in which each letter of each word produces an effect—*L'Eventail de Mademoiselle Mallarmé*, for example, or this painting of mellow sweetness pierced by two great metallic notes:

Mais langoureusement longe
Comme de blanc linge ôté
Tel fugace oiseau se plonge
Exultatrice à côté
Dans l'onde toi devenue
Ta jubilation nue. (*Petit Air, I.*)

Learned poetry—but poetry at times obscure. During his lifetime Mallarmé had a reputation for obscurity not yet entirely dissipated. He probably suffered from it. He certainly enjoyed it. He maintained his notoriety as a mystifier by not explaining what he meant by "putting back shadow" in certain of his works. It is not doubtful that he made for himself a fretwork manner—which renders very funny this description of the drama at Brussels: "The gesture repulsed Verlaine who fired, bewildered, a pistol, at the indifferent and fell in tears face forward . . . Rimbaud came back, his wound dressed, from the hospital and, in the street, determined to leave, received another ball, now public." It is regrettable that his poetry has seemed only "a rose in the shades" to well-disposed readers. It is to them it should be repeated that, if Mallarmé sometimes brought to his work the obstinacy of an old maid who treats her furniture as if it were human, he devoted to it however the best of himself with the most heroic abnegation.

WOOLWICH PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

A good third of his verse is as clear as his fashion notes in *La Dernière Mode*. His reputation as a difficult author is then founded upon three poems, about twenty sonnets and the *Divagations*—collections forming, it is true, the principal part of his work. If we seek the reasons for his undeniable obscurity, we shall, in the first place, find his hatred of the oratorical. He carries this to the extremity of the following principle: "To name an object is to suppress three-quarters of the enjoyment of the poem which consists in the pleasure of guessing little by little. To suggest, that is the dream." His horror of development, based, perhaps, upon his knowledge of English syntax, less strict than ours, suppresses verbs and subordinate clauses. It will suffice to put them back to understand:

Proclamèrent très haut le sortilège bu . . .

or:

Un peu profond ruisseau calmonié la mort. . . .

The two versions of *Victorieusement* permit us to seize on the quick his method of development in depth. He treats these two verses:

Une millième fois avec ardeur s'apprête
Mon solitaire amour à vaincre le tombeau

as an initial premise, common to the reader and himself, and he transforms them thus:

O rire si là-bas une pourpre s'apprête
A ne tendre royal que mon absent tombeau.

We see to what powerful shortcuts this refinement tends. Let us add moreover that it is often a response to the difficulty of what he wishes to express:

Tel qu'en lui-même enfin l'éternité le change

condenses the contents of a speech into twelve syllables. The delicate psychology calls for subtle expression in "There must be this flight into self; one could again; but self, does not it already become far to withdraw?" The obscurity is justified, perhaps necessary, when it is a matter of rendering the impression of the already seen, of the very remote present (*Remémoration d'amis belges*) or that pursuit of a verbal hallucination (*Le Démon de l'analogie*) which permits caricaturists to present the portrait of a Mallarmé eternally in mourning for the death of the Penultimate. The *Prose pour Des Esseintes* is obscure because it contains at once a treatise on poetic art, a love poem and a

satire. That, in order to appreciate the ironically veiled emotion of its final stanza:

Avant qu'un sépulcre ne rie
Sous aucun climat, son aïeul,
De porter ce nom: Pulchérie!
Caché par le trop grand glaïeul,

one has had to disentangle in the poem this triple current, reveals its weakness but it also shows its rare density.

The concrete and the abstract dispute his mind without coming to any agreement. He is the master of an impressionism which confuses all the tenses, which dispenses with space and duration, mixes imagination and reality:

La chevelure vol d'une flamme à l'extrême
Occident de désirs pour la tout déployer
Se pose (je dirais mourir un diadème)
Vers le front couroné son ancien foyer.

His real sensuality translated itself, at least once, in a living atmosphere:

Tu sais, ma passion, que, pourpre et déjà mure,
Chaque grenade éclate et d'abeilles murmure;
Et notre sang, épris de qui le va saisir,
Coule pour tout l'essaim éternel du désir.

Here he can avoid the crime of the faun and does not part "the dishevelled cluster" of the impressions:

. . . Si clair,
Leur incarnat léger, qu'il voltige dans l'air
Assoupi de sommeils touffus . . .

but this happy vintage of the real is rare. A great deal of wit often weighs upon this flesh.

He had always been inclined to transpose the object into an image:

O miroir,
Eau froide par l'ennui dans ton cadre gelée . . .

permitting him at once the creation of other images which the insufficiently plastic reality did not suggest. The tendency was accentuated by his hatred of continuous development and "the demon of analogy" which constructs a whole sonnet on a subtle crescendo (swan metaphor, swan bird, Swan [*Cygnus*] a constellation in *Le Vierge, le*

Vivace), as also by his fondness for the artificial, embodied in that Hérodiade who was his Hadaly:

Et, pareille à la chair de la femme, la rose

Cruelle, Hérodiade en fleur du jardin clair . . . (Fleurs)
Oui, c'est pour moi, pour moi que je fleuris déserte . . .

he made his heroine say; and he himself sought refuge in a kind of very elusive mandarinism:

Je veux délaisser l'art vorace d'un pays
Cruel . . .
Imiter le Chinois au cœur limpide et fin . . .

who paints landscapes on a porcelain cup. He has carried this refinement, in *Declaration foraine*, to the pedantry of a digression justifying an irregular sonnet by the example of the Elizabethans. This preference accorded to art over life he has erected into a proud principle:

Ma faim qui d'aucuns fruits ici ne se régale
Trouve en leur docte manque une saveur égale.

Not without a persistent uneasiness. Long unrecognized, he suffered from it. There is a trace of melancholy in his allusion to "a contemporary French poet excluded for various reasons from all participation in official displays of beauty." He possessed none of the qualities which make a name known to the public. He loved privacy, inner retirement, in the home described in several sonnets, amid the furniture of *Frisson d'hiver*. Shrinking from any contacts whatsoever, he had a feminine delicacy well expressed by his descriptions of dress, concert audiences, a "fluttered silence of crêpe de chine." He let himself be obsessed by the negative, by the existence of a "being of non-being" (Thibaudet), and his *Nénuphar blanc* is the masterpiece of the poem of absence. In vain does he affirm with pathetic insistence that his retirement is not a solitude, that

Nous fûmes deux, je le maintiens.

He himself doubts it at times and asks himself: has he committed "the crime" of the *Faune*, dissociated art and life? Never did he accept things simply, not even his calling, "a linguistic toil through which my noble poetic faculty daily sobs at being interrupted." The note to the *Coup de dès* carries this mania for reticence to the highest pitch. He published and wanted to dissuade us from reading this preface to a poem from which will emerge "nothing or almost an art."

"Nothing or almost an art." Why this sudden righting of the

phrase into an affirmative? Because here we touch the absolute, the only domain in which he no longer hesitates. "I exhibit like a dandy my incompetence in anything but the absolute." What does the rest matter? "I confess I give ideas, practical or for show, the same inattention borne along the street by passing women." The important thing is what is "gratuitous." Vigny himself had not had a more exalted conception of the poet's rôle. To define it Mallarmé sometimes went astray in artificial works (*Phénomène futur*, *Plainte d'automne*), through generosity, not having made allowance, in Poe for mystification, in Huysmans for unintelligence; but what nobility in his really royal portrayal of Villiers! No definition of literary art is firmer than his "Its magic, if it be not to liberate, outside of a handful of dust or reality without enclosing it, in the book, even as text, the volatile dispersal of wit which has to do with nothing but the musicality of all." He is not ignorant of the fact that this aristocratic attitude will lead to outward detachment ("Respectful of the common motive as a fashion of treating it indifferently") and to Narcissism, "to defining or to making, with regard to oneself, a proof that the sight responds to an imaginative comprehension, it is true, in the hope of contemplating oneself in it"; but, sure of his truth as soon as the absolute alone is at stake, he opposes to contradictions the smiling politeness of that voice "flatted with irony" (Goncourts' *Journal*) which we hear in the sonnet *Toute l'âme résumée* or in this passage: "I say that there exists between the old methods [of magic] and the sorcery which poetry will remain, a secret parity. I state it here, and perhaps, personally, it has delighted me to indicate it, by attempts, in a degree which has exceeded the aptitude to enjoy it accorded by my contemporaries."

Were contemporaries absolutely unjust to him? The reply is a last antithesis, the union in Mallarmé of a genius which *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* would suffice to prove and of a curious sterility. "Mallarmé," said Charles Cros, "is a broken Baudelaire and the pieces have never succeeded in sticking themselves together again." As in the case of Baudelaire, writing was a labour for him. These beautiful verses of *Le Guignon:*

> *O Mort, le seul baiser aux bouches taciturnes . . .*
> *Et laisse un bloc boueux du blanc couple nageur . . .*

were first printed:

> *La mort fut un baiser sur ces fronts taciturnes . . .*
> *Et fait un fou crotté du superbe nageur . . .*

The first version of *Placet futile* quoted its reference to Boucher incorrectly. Prosaic expressions are found in his most careful poems.

His ambitious efforts reveal a fatal constructive impotence. *Hérodiade* remains incomplete and nothing can be more lacking than the lyricism in *Le Cantique de Saint-Jean.* He himself presented many poems as "studies for something better, as one cleans the nib of one's pen." He maintained his faithful admirers in the anticipation of a great work which he never realized. There has recently been published a volume of "occasional verses" in which a mocking sonnet for the inauguration of the theatre at Valvins and a precious *Verre d'eau:*

Ta lèvre contre le cristal
Gorgée à gorgée y compose
Le souvenir pourpre et vital
De la moins éphemère rose,

do not compensate for the silly trifles—speeches, toasts, fans, mirrors, etc.—of what Thibaudet very justly calls "a genius out of a job." This "mask of sterility" Mallarmé feared after *Angoisse;* and, at the same time, he knew that, in the rare moments when his genius spoke, he revealed, to quote Valéry, "poetry in the pure state." He kept the right to affirm that this failure—due to the complexity of its object and the imperfection of the language it underwent—had no trace of a vulgar renunciation of the absolute.

Vanquished by all the powers he called "Chance," he took this defeat as the theme of his last work, *Un coup de dès jamais n'abolira le Hasard.* Now it is the law of all thought that it "throws dice." Here, then, is the creator struggling with the waves. He throws the dice "from the depths of a shipwreck" perhaps necessary to the creative act; but he dares not play the game "as a hoary-headed maniac" and succumbs. His imagination—ever lightened, a human shadow, a veil, finally a feather—comes to rest upon the cap of some Hamlet, "a latent lord who cannot become." In the presence of this hero "the false manor" which presumed to impose "a boundary upon the infinite" fades, but a blackboard arises, a fresh field of battle and of defeat since, in spite of all its subtleties, Number is still Chance. The pen, the symbol of literary effort, then, founders like the boat which bore the living effort. Chance triumphs and will triumph eternally, unless there be room, in the far-off heavens, for some supreme constellation, some victorious struggle. For thought will ever renew the combat: "All thought throws dice."

This poem presents itself in an unaccustomed form. Already, in *Le Mystère dans les Lettres,* Mallarmé had employed an expressive

typography "to mobilize about an idea the diverse gleams of the mind, at the desired distance, by sentences." In the *Coup de dès*, taking the double page as a unit, he tried, by differences of type, by blanks, by calculated intervals, to lay bare "thought with retreats, extensions, flights, or even its design," to distinguish the motifs "preponderant, secondary, and adjacent," to compose in a word, "a score for anyone wishing to read aloud."

His experiment has been variously appreciated. Some have seen in it a wager of pure madness. Paul Valéry, to whom Mallarmé submitted the proofs of what he designated "an act of insanity" (but who will know his real thought?), was most deeply impressed by it, "as if had appeared a constellation which finally meant something." In this poem which sums up Mallarmé's thought and paints the drama of his life, which reconciles his double technique, musical and visual, we, for our part, salute a masterpiece, the poem of the Idea, already in embryo in the carnal *Après-midi d'un Faune*.

Mallarmé's influence on the Symbolist evolution was great. It was not confined to his work. Even those who would gladly have questioned this succumbed to the conversational charm of a man who, according to André Gidé's description, "thought before he spoke." Nor has one the right to reject from this estimate the legend which surrounded him. For, as he himself wrote concerning Rimbaud, "one must never neglect, in idea, any of the possibilities which fly about a figure." Among the poets of the end of the nineteenth century, Mallarmé appeared clad with a heroic prestige. He deserved this homage for having devoted himself exclusively to his art and to thought. If it be necessary to distinguish, among his works, those—from *Fenêtres* to *L'Après-midi*—which are universally admired and those which are still debated, this proves above all how active his influence continues to be. Does the *Coup de dès*, nourished by Vigny, by Shakespeare and by Wagner, mark the farthest confine of a poetic continent beyond which everything is disorder, or else will it inspire other poems still more boldly emancipatory which will shed light upon the pages of his own works deemed obscure? For, even when they seem to offer us but

Le transparent glacier des vols qui n'ont pas fui,

no one can claim to measure the scope of these liberated flights.

6. THE SYMBOLIST SCHOOL

In an important study presented as a preface to *Premiers Poèmes*, Gustave Kahn claims to have been the inventor of free verse. Many

discussions have arisen around this assertion. This is the essence of the matter: the most daring innovators had until then rendered both the verse and the stanza more flexible without definitely breaking with these traditional forms. Kahn was among the first, if not the first, to set up absolute liberty as a principle. Imbued with musical influences, he essayed to give the verse and the rhythmic *laisse* proportions determined by the movement of the thought. Such an enterprise rarely attains perfection all at once. *Les Palais nomades* contains, in addition to the prose poems distinctly influenced by Baudelaire, a great many experimental verses, destined to free the ear from the yoke of the oratorical *alexandrin.*

Several of *Les Chansons d'amant* also show their age a little cruelly. Doubtless one would hardly endorse Gourmont's judgment on *Domaine de Fée,* "the most delightful little book of love-poems given us since *Fêtes galantes,*" for there is a great deal of nonsense in this "divine sincerity" and Gustave Kahn's sensibility, his longing for a dream Orient, goes awkwardly at times with the brutal precision to which certain poems in *Le Livre d'images* aspire.

It would be unjust to dwell upon the failings of a true poet in search of a new path—one who, in the domain of musical poetry, has produced works which will live. He has revealed the secret of barbaric harmony:

Maturité de vos seins, en vous penchant vers lui
dans le songe indistinct de féeries vous avez lui
comme claire robe de lune en opacité de nuit . . .

yet unheard in our literature. He has given it elegies of long ecstasy:

J'attends dans l'heure obscure et calme . . .
. . . Chantonne lentement et très bas . . . mon cœur pleure . . .

The form most indebted to him is, however, the poetic *lied.* While the majority of his contemporaries were haunted by Wagner, he remembered Schumann and, side by side with orchestrated poems, such as *File à ton rouet . . .* he has written these very tender, artless, mysterious songs:

Des chevaliers qui sont partis . . .
Dans des rêves clos j'ai bâti mon rêve . . .
Filles de Bagdad qui partez en mer . . .

where the popular form veils the refinement of an extreme civilization.

In the regular verse of *Cueille d'avril,* Francis Viélé-Griffin already revealed more or less completely the musical facility which makes the

charm of *Dea*, of the variations on a theme (*La mer*) and of his "*euphonies*" obviously inspired by Verlaine. *Heure mystique* already proved that philosophical attempts were less suited to his talent than the soft harmonies of the *Carmen perpetuum* or the stanzas of *Triplici*.

Joies is Viélé-Griffin's first volume as a writer of free verse. This flexible form harmonizes moreover with the general tone of the inspiration which is now that of legends with refrains, of artless rounds, now that of an intimate poetry enamoured of grace or of sinuous melancholy.

In *Les Cygnes*, on the contrary, too many poems with abstract subtitles give that impression of loquacity which is the stumbling-block of free verse, and the reader quickly turns from it to the reveries where the phantom of Helen passes and to the simple songs of *Fleurs du chemin*.

La Clarté de vie is probably Viélé-Griffin's most finished book. It is dedicated to "spring in Touraine" and sings, in the *Chansons à l'ombre*, of life in the Loire country-side, the cycle of the year marked by the varying work in the fields where

La vie indulgente et complice
Varie d'un geste le décor . . .

and by reading and meditation during a winter without harshness. The grace here becomes at times a trifle garrulous. It usually keeps an idle affectation in harmony with its setting:

Je n'ai pas peur de te chanter, Printemps, j'ai honte! . . .
Vois! qui va s'éveillant
La Vie au bois dormant . . .

Into this poem of mellow nature slip delicate human interventions certainly more profound than the strained expressions of abstract ideas. The same duality is remarked in the form. *En Arcadie* is a series of antique episodes which often bring the poet back to regular verse:

Si bien que, dans ma main sans cesse appesantie,
Je sens le poids des jours avec le poids des nuits
Et que mon pas, jadis alerte, s'embarrasse
De l'écheveau qui fait ma marche déjà lasse.

In the same way *La Partenza*, a farewell to a "pleasant land," is entirely written in octosyllabic verses grouped in four-line stanzas, three or four forming a song. On the contrary the free verse and the rhythmic *laisse* find their place in the *In memoriams* (Laforgue, Verlaine, Mallarmé) and in the saints' legends of *Amour Sacré*, among

which the *Sainte Marguerite de Cortone*, entirely in dialogue, reminds us that Viélé-Griffin wrote also for the stage. The production of *Phocas le jardinier* has moreover shown that the literary qualities of such a drama were ill-suited to scenic violence.

Much more than in the noble, cold *Lumière de Grèce*, much more than in the school works which occasionally evoke the memory of Régnier or of Verhaeren, we must seek Viélé-Griffin's orginal contribution in his spontaneous songs and in narrative poems like *La Chevauchée d'Yeldis* and *Wieland le forgeron*. Doubtless they reveal the Romantic element residing in Symbolism with, if one likes, the Wagner of the Sword as mediator. At least the necessity for clear story-telling contains within poetic limits the generous but quickly oratorical appeals.

Among all the poets of his generation, Henri de Régnier is the one who most rapidly and naturally attained official glory—the by no means contemptible recompense of a noble poet for whom his art was the loyal development of a personality. However lively may have been his affection for Mallarmé and his sympathy for the Symbolist brigade, he never subordinated to them the expression of a somewhat haughty sensibility, modern by culture, yet willingly turned towards every idealized past. His first volumes, *Les Lendemains* and *Apaisement*, contained memories of Hérédia (*Email and Portrait*) and of Verlaine (*Terrasse*) with Baudelairianisms like this echo from *Le Balcon:*

Abattement des soirs dans les chambres fermées
Qu'illumine l'éclair rougeoyant des charbons.

(*Soirs.*)

At the same time, however, appeared the original Régnier who, in *Résidence royale*, described:

Les jardins réguliers aux belles ordonnances . . . ,

who sought the formal fullness of cæsural verses:

De dormir sur son cœur et de baiser ses lèvres . . .
Ils étaient le présent, et j'étais le passé . . . ,

who reared to Venus a neo-classical temple, for

Les déesses veillent encore aux péristyles,

as he said in those *Sites* the twenty-five sonnets of which aim at painting scenes rather than at rendering impressions.

In the *Episodes* this progression towards ancient themes continues

through more contemporary researches where he paraphrases Mallarmé and Viélé-Griffin; but the *Sonnets* (1888–1890) bring out Régnier's personal manner. Here nothing is lacking and he composes his favourite landscape of roses, of cypresses, of "nonchalant summers," of "taciturn" things. Antiquity, a humanist's antiquity, holds first place. He still yields at times to the temptation of employing it for worldly allegories. Usually he lends it a fluid majesty:

Pour, au nom de la cendre et du laurier amer,
Dire, du haut du porche à ceux qu'en tente l'ombre,
Si le masque d'or pâle a des lèvres de chair;

or else the evocative familiarity of this picture

Un satyre à mi-corps sortant de la forêt
Dont le feuillage enguirlanda ses torses cornes
Sonne en sa conque à l'aube claire qui parait.

Poèmes anciens et romanesques brought his first essays in free verse and *Tel qu'un songe* attested his mastery of the two instruments Sometimes it pleased him to combine them, as in *La Gardienne.* This diversity was to be found again later in *Les Jeux rustiques et divins*—happy title!—where he passed from grave invocation (*Sagesse de l'Amour*) and from the thrilling poem of the creation, *Le Vase,* steeped in Mallarméan atmosphere, to the subtle music of the *Odelettes:*

Un petit roseau m'a suffi
Pour faire frémir l'herbe haute
Et tout le pré
Et les deux saules
Et le ruisseau qui chante aussi;
Un petit roseau m'a suffi
A faire chanter la forêt.

Les Médailles d'argile is the book most generally relished by Henri de Régnier's admirers. It is indeed the most representative. It reveals the defects of a sustained eloquence, the abuse of the "alternate gestures" and of the instinctively mannered verses (the two words are not contradictory) which have encouraged parody:

Si le pavage est rouge et si le mur est blanc
(*Réveil.*)

Tu récoltes l'Eté et tu cueilles l'Automne
(*Belle année.*)

A d'indivisibles fleurs que nous ne verrons pas
(*Bouquet noir.*)

Likewise, if *Les Passants du passé* is the work of an Hérédia less artificially marmorean (*Portrait double*), these sonnets give, in the long run, a shade of coldness to the reserve which impels Régnier to prefer general evocation to the characterized personage, to paint *the* tramp, *the* minion, *the* courtier. This is a classical tendency, identical with that which incites him to reserve free verse for the introductions, the commentaries, the personal or more specially lyrical poems—in short, to accord it precisely the rôle assigned it by Mallarmé. In this collection, dedicated to André Chénier, the most perfect successes are classical poems some of which count among their author's best: works of an Alexandrian refinement (*L'Arc, Echo*), firm, highly characterized songs (*Lever de lune, Le Jardin mouillé*), reveries of a lordly gravity melted a moment (*Sur la grève*), sonnets perfumed with Hellenism like *Chrysilla* and *Bilitis* in which Régnier has happily evoked one of the fatherlands of his art:

Et moi, que visita la Muse aux ailes d'or,
Je resterai pareille à l'amphore enbaumée
Où, captif aux parois qu'elle respire encor,
Vibre et rôde le vol d'une abeille enfermée.

La Cité des eaux describes another of them, more complex because less exclusively artistic, the Versailles of

La perspective avec l'allée et l'escalier,
Et le rond-point, et le parterre, et l'attitude
De l'if pyramidal auprès du buis taillé;
La grandeur taciturne et la paix monotone
De ce mélancolique et suprême séjour,
Et ce parfum du soir et cette odeur d'automne
Qui s'exhalent de l'ombre avec la fin du jour.

In this aristocratically superannuated setting he gives full vein to his love of reflections, inverted images, dualities and parallelisms. *L'Odeur, Le Socle,* and *Le Bouquet* are probably more sure to live than the eloquent *Marsyas* in which Régnier pays his debt to Mallarmé; but the novelty of this volume is that thenceforth (for it will continue in *La Sandale ailée*) the poet consents to let himself be seen in his work. Reacting perhaps against the objective novelist he becomes elsewhere, he alternates, with those antique inscriptions which will always be so dear to him (see *L'Automne*), beautiful poems of passionate melancholy like *La Lune jaune, La Colline* or *Le Reproche;* but never does he slip into romantic confessions, and it is in the lyric poet's classical attitude that he wishes to present himself to posterity.

If Henri de Régnier's example proves what almost Parnassian reserve could survive the Symbolist revolution, Francis Jammes shows what broken barriers henceforth permitted the poet to assign as objects for his art the least romantic incidents of his daily existence. The Intimists had hitherto chosen, to depict them, the more representative episodes of their life. Baudelaire magnified his encounter with a passer-by because this passer-by was Love. Jammes says a visitor entered his house asking him:

Comment allez-vous, Monsieur Jammes?

and takes good care to add nothing. For "it is an error, when writing a story, to insist that the plot shall present that vague, artificial tiresome thing called interest." Jammes tells about Jammes abundantly. Without tiring, he shows *La Naissance du poète, Un jour* (of the poet's life), *Le Poète et sa Femme, La Mort du poète, Le Poète rustique,* so that his supreme skill is probably having rendered impossible every criticism which, bearing upon his work, would seem to cast aspersions upon the Christian and family virtues of which he offers and celebrates so meritorious a model.

Jammes would himself distinguish several periods in his evolution. He has insisted upon his "return to Catholicism." His reader will be less rigorous and will see him in the attitude of his preface to the volume *De l'Angélus de l'aube à l'Angélus du soir:* "O Lord, You have called me among men. Here I am. I suffer and I love. I have spoken with the voice You gave me . . . I will go where You wish, when You wish"—a solemn posture tempered by this observation from *Le Poète rustique:* "Rightly or wrongly, he thinks the Master smiles upon him sometimes with that indulgence one has for inopportune friends." The fine poems in *En Dieu* and *L'Eglise habillée de feuilles* attest the sincerity of this Franciscan faith now grave, now familiar.

It derives indeed its dual inspiration less from a mystically elated will than from a profound sentiment of nature. If he has occasionally, apropos of familiar memories, evoked the longing for extended voyages and distant lands, Jammes has, in the country-side of Orthez, found inexhaustible sources of poetic inspiration. He has devoted to its description poems which rank among the most finished he has written (*Dans la grange, Les Villages* and several of his *Géorgiques chrétiennes*). He has above all associated this nature with his tenderest sentiments:

Tu aurais l'ombre des noisetiers sur ton oreille,
puis nous mêlerions nos bouches, cessant de rire,
pour dire notre amour que l'on ne peut pas dire;
et je trouverais, sur le rouge de tes lèvres,
le gout des raisins blonds, des roses rouges et des guêpes . . .
(*Angélus.*)

He has shown by what paths of sensation and of thought nature led him back from human to divine love:

Une noix d'Amérique est tombée sur l'allée.
Elle annonce l'automne et son odeur étrange
substitue à l'amour doucement désolé
l'amour de Dieu vivant aux ténèbres des branches
(*Clairières dans le Ciel.*)

If simplicity is an ornament, some of the poems are too ornate. Pieces like *Ecoute dans le jardin . . .* leave the impression he has written down everything that came into his head. He is not unaware, even days when he fails, what effect these simple notations can produce upon the imagination:

Mais si tu étais en chemise auprès
des tisons tous noirs, je pense
que là, toute seule, tu serais
blanche, blanche, blanche, blanche . . .
(*Angélus.*)

For he knows the danger of silliness. Through contact with animals and with his friend the hare *Patte-Usée*, he has rejuvenated the mischievous spirit of old La Fontaine.

He is equally preserved from banality by a sentimental imagination where mingle memories of Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, where admiration for Eugénie de Guérin does not exclude tenderness for Mme. de Warens. He owes it the grace of his three heroines, Clara d'Ellébeuse, Almaïde d'Etremont and Pomme d'Anis. "The first, beneath heavy golden tresses, drooped a brow charged with storm and with blue sky. The second, under her mourning curls, whipped up her steed, and the perfect bow of her face darted at the same time voluptuousness, bitterness and remorse. Finally, Pomme d'Anis, her heart heavy with love, like a rose drenched with rain, let her donkey amble, and the grace of one of her lifted knees modestly hid the other's embarrassment." Poetic preciousness and love of nature prevent so perilously edifying a story as *M. le Curé d'Ozeron* from becoming tedious. For Jammes remains a poet quite as much

when it pleases him to refine on his simplicity as when he expresses it in its original purity.

Constantly, and even in the passages where his didacticism is not sensibly superior to that of the apothecaries whom this gentle poet so heartily detests, he soars again with a wide sweep and recovers the accent of his dedication "to Mary of Nazareth, mother of God," which precedes *Ma fille Bernadette:* "You see I no longer know clearly what I write, but my thought attaches itself to You like this flowering creeper, and to You I dedicate this poor work, like a servant her pot of mignonette . . . and it trembles in my uplifted hands."

To estimate the importance of the Symbolist movement, one should not restrict oneself to a few celebrated names. The majority of the writers of note at the beginning of the twentieth century passed through the Symbolist apprenticeship; and it would be unjust to forget the numerous poets who surrounded the masters. Certain of them disappeared too soon to give their full measure, like that emphatic, sincere Emmanuel Signoret or Ephraïm Mikhael who, at twenty, could draw a harmony from secular legends (*L'Etrangère*) as well as from modern life (*La Dame en deuil*). Brothers to these are the poets limited in their production: Pierre Quillard who dedicated to Mikhael's memory his *Lyre héroïque et dolente*, poems of a rich culture —that of the translator of the *Mimes d'Hérondas;* Stuart Merrill, a refined artist who was to rise to poignant hymns of sadness. Contrasting with these quiet poets are two effervescents: Paul-Napoléon Roinard, eager for great themes, from the social satire of *Nos Plaies* to the *Donneur d'illusions*, "a synthesis of love, of all loves"; Saint-Pol-Roux, the fertile inventor of metaphors whose work is as motley as this title, *De la colombe au corbeau par le paon*, who attempted, in his *Dame à la faulx*, "an inner tragedy, exteriorized at times in broad, popular frescoes," an art aiming at "ideo-realization" and, in order to conform to scenic exigencies, at "translating a concave theme convexly."

Laurent Tailhade, a rhetorician from *Le Parnasse*, coexisted for some time with Symbolism before returning to that journalism which journalists style Aristophanic and for which literature has no very definite name. Adolphe Retté, too, took part in this movement, derived from it a volume of memories and related his evolution *Du Diable à Dieu.* Ernest Raynaud imitated Rimbaud, wrote on his own account somewhat coldly noble verses and constituted himself historian of *La Bataille symboliste.* Jean Lorrain preceded his volumes of hallucinated stories and haunted novels of which *M. de*

Phocas is the type, with very artificial verses where the influence of the Goncourts encounters that of Gustave Moreau. A.-Ferdinand Hérold, translator of Æschylus, Euripides and Kâlidasa, has often sought repose from his scholarly undertakings in firm sonnets or in liquid songs. Even Camille Mauclair, a fertile polygraph, sought to reconcile Schumann with Symbolism in his *Sonatines d'automne* before showing that nothing human is totally foreign to his multifarious criticism.

7. THE POETS OF THE NORTH

Symbolism, which liberated dream, was particularly calculated to seduce the northern imagination. It is then quite natural that several of the writers it can claim as its own were born in Flanders or in Belgium. A study of Symbolism would be incomplete did it not mention the name of Grégoire Le Roy, bard of the sad village and of the melancholy human heart. The false naïveté of Max Elskamp is not without charm and Maeterlinck placed very high the melodious *Chanson d'Eve* by Charles Van Lerberghe. Albert Mockel, founder of that important review *La Wallonie*, was the poet of *Chantefable un peu naïve*, as well as being one of the best Symbolist critics. André Fontainas, a disciple of Mallarmé and a penetrating novelist, published mannered poems before devoting himself to art criticism and to the translation of Keats, De Quincey, Meredith and Shelley. René Ghil's motley work was read, at least through curiosity, for the theory of a scientific poetry and of verbal instrumentation which he had defined in his *Traité du Verbe*. Among all these seekers stand out three poets, two of whom count among the most celebrated of their day.

Georges Rodenbach's success was formerly very considerable. He identified his work with a city and created a fashion for Bruges la Morte with its atmosphere of grey, gentle melancholy. It was a novelty unrevolutionary enough to conquer immediately a public in love with poetic mist; but its lack of depth compromised the duration of its influence. Already Verhaeren, though he praised this poetry, pointed out its weakness: "Precise, spruce, Sunday mysticism," said he, "communion-bench mysticism which, hands joined, goes to take the Host, not barefooted, walking on briars and thorns, but treading nice, clean stones with white, piously muffled sandals." This superficial character of Rodenbach's thought becomes disagreeably evident when he writes in prose. Certain reflections in *Bruges la Morte* are disappointingly commonplace: "The movements of the soul have also their acquired speed . . . Happiness, like health, is enjoyed only by

contrast; and love, too, is the intermittence of itself . . . love breaks are like little deaths, having also their partings without farewells."

Too easily inclined to take a finical improvisation for a profound and original thought, Rodenbach is a poet only when he limits himself to noting the sensation of a moment, without pretending to generalize it. His personal art is the minute transcription of the sensation of a being refined by meditation and suffering. Really to enjoy the charm of *Les Vies encloses* and *Le Royaume du silence*, one must ruthlessly reject all the pretty complimentary verses in order to evoke, in a propitious shade, the peaceful images of *Le Béguinage flamand* or this cloud procession in the mirror of a passive soul:

Sur le ciel immuable ont flotté des nauges,
Tissus à la dérive et parure changeante;
O nuages, partis pour de lointains voyages,
Entrant soudain dans notre âme qui s'en argente;
Et je suis, dans mon âme où, calmes, ils s'en vont,
Les nuages qui se défont et se refont . . .

Like Rodenbach's, Albert Samain's life was short; but, whereas Rodenbach appears to have described himself entirely in his books, Samain seems not to have had time to express the whole of his complex personality. Its analysis, indeed, has by no means been exhausted when we have quoted the celebrated verse:

Mon âme est une infante en robe de parade . . .

even when corrected by this other definition:

Mon âme est un velours douloureux que tout froisse . . .

He has sometimes been defined as a Symbolist classic. It is true that an occasional noted sonnet (*Lentement, doucement . . .*) is, as it were, a happy *mise au point* of the poetry of his time to which he owed, in other ways, more artificial inspiration (*Soir d'Empire, Vision*). It is in his technique that he is least original. He recalls Hugo:

Une main de lumière a pris ma main dans l'ombre . . .
Et par de longs fils d'or nos cœurs liés aux choses.

His *Nocturne provincial* is a pastiche of Verlaine heightened with some reminders of Baudelaire. The sonnet:

Nos sens, nos sens divins, sont de beaux enfants nus

dissolves a Parnassian theme in sweet Symbolist music. The artist he is capable of being permits himself nonchalant reposes. Witness the four rhyming adjectives in *ives* in *Heure d'été*, or these verses:

Le noir des jardins s'ouvre aux mystères seulets . . .
De beaux soirs féminins où le cœur se dorlote . . .

where we cannot say whether the air of familiarity is affectation or laziness. There are both in the abuse of *douceur* and *or*, in the repetition of certain images:

Et que mon âme, où vit le goût secret des fleurs
Soit comme un lys fidèle et pâle à ta ceinture . . .
(*Au Jardin de l'Infante.*)

Mon âme, comme un lys, passée à ta ceinture
(*Chariot d'Or.*)

The construction of his sentences borders on the monotonous. In two sonnets (*Versailles*, III and IV) will be noted: *C'est ici que la reine . . . c'est cet air vieille France ici . . . mais ce qui prend mon cœur . . . c'est ce Grand Trianon. Cette ombre . . . hélas! c'est le génie en deuil. . . . Et c'est ce qui vous donne. . . .*

Sterile flaw-picking, it will be said, which does not prevent Samain's being an inspired elegiac; but if his ambition was higher, if he dreamed of being a great poet, it was not useless to show why death surprised him before he had been able to free himself completely. Now he was working to this end. He was not satisfied to cultivate the vein of modern sensibility which had won him his first success. He turned to the past, to the graceful engravings of gallant subjects and of *embarquements pour Cythère* (*Watteau, L'Agréable Leçon*). He rediscovered that sentimental "sliding" which, through Ossian and Lamartine (*En printemps*), has led souls from dryness to lyricism. He drew from pagan antiquity matter for broad frescoes (*La Chimère, Les Sirènes, Cléopâtre*) and for delicate idylls (*Clydie* and *Néère* in the *Chariot d'Or*, *Xanthis* and *Pannyre* in *Aux flancs du vase*). He borrowed from it the subject of *Polyphème* one scene of which brings in irrelevantly Gobaud and Yniold but where the voices of nature and of passion speak in noble accents. This diversity of inspiration is visible in the *Contes* among which must be unreservedly admired the ironical *Xanthis* and the melancholic *Hyalis*, striking proofs of a capacity for renovating an old theme which authorizes us to believe that Samain had not given his full measure.

At least he unquestionably remains one of the great elegiac poets of France, we should perhaps say *the* great French elegiac, seeing that no other, from Ronsard to Chénier, and from Baudelaire to Verlaine, possessed this fluidity, this abandonment to tender revery whereby certain of Albert Samain's poems rise naturally from lovers' hearts to their lips:

Devant la mer, un soir, un beau soir d'Italie . . .
Le ciel suave était jonché de pâles roses . . .
L'heure comme nous rêve accoudée aux remparts. . . .

The first words of such poems are like a long sweep of the bow, liberating the captive music.

He does not seek to explain the mystery of his evocations. Perhaps he communicates their sentiment to us so well only because he accepted it without discussion. Twelve syllables suffice him to fix forever the most subtly fugitive impressions:

L'infini de douceur qu'ont les choses brisées . . .
O robes qui passez, nonchalantes, dans l'âme . . .
C'est un soir tendre comme un visage de femme . . .
Oh! ce nom où la fleur de sa chair est restée . . .
Et c'était comme une musique qui se fane. . . .

Admirable verses of complex simplicity—verses which are not the whole of Samain's poetry but which mark, however, its most perfect success.

Because it excludes halftones, the personality of Emile Verhaeren is none the less rich in vigorous contrasts. With *Les Flamandes* (1883) he asserted a will for aggressive realism:

Ces hommes de labour que Greuze affadissait . . .
Les voici noirs, grossiers, bestiaux—ils sont tels.
(*Les Paysans.*)

Here he already manifested his personal gifts: a precise vision daunted by the brutality of no detail, no comparison; and, at the same time, distortion of material objects into hallucinated images. A first lull was visible in *Les Moines* (1886) where the poet clothed childish remembrances in a garb sometimes Parnassian, yet original through the gigantic character of the images (see *Rentrée des moines*, or *Soir religieux*). Verhaeren was to remain all his life haunted by this monastic ideal of a violent, stormy peace:

Je rêve une existence en un cloître de fer,
Brûlée au jeûne et sèche et râpée aux cilices,
Où l'on abolirait en de muets supplices,
Par seule ardeur de l'âme, enfin, toute la chair
(*Vers le cloître.*)

His drama, *Le Cloître*, depicts the frantic struggle between the human soul and the repose which is supposed to be bestowed upon it with the white mantle. It is easy to see what trace of romanticism remains in

the two states of mind. Verhaeren will never disavow this warring antinomy, even when he has contributed by his panting form to Symbolist emancipation, even when his revolt has found the assurance of a faith in human progress.

Romanticism and realism give themselves free rein in the celebrated trilogy, *Les Soirs*, *Les Débâcles*, *Les Flambeaux noirs*, followed by those volumes with visionary titles: *Les Apparus dans mes chemins*, *Les Campagnes hallucinées*, *Les Villes tentaculaires*. Romanticism exasperated itself in the furious flagellations of the *Dialogue* or of *La Couronne:*

Et, plus intimement encore, mes anciens râles
D'amour vers des ventres muflés de toison d'or
Et mes vices d'esprit pour les ardeurs claustrales . . .
Et, plus au fond, le rut meme de ma torture.

(*La Couronne.*)

He is also "the visionary of the Flemish countrysides." [1] Even when he paints a genre picture, in the manner of the patient artists of his country, a powerful suggestion doubles its interest (*Le Moulin*, *Les Horloges*). Under his fiery glance nature assumes nightmare aspects. Here are the oaks:

L'hiver, les chênes lourds et vieux, les chenes tôrs,
Geignant sous la tempête et projetant leurs branches
Comme de grands bras qui veulent fuir leur corps,
Mais que tragiquement la chair retient aux branches . . .

and here is the wind, "the savage November wind":

L'avez-vous rencontré, le vent,
Au carrefour des trois cents routes?
L'avez-vous rencontré, le vent,
Le vent des peurs et des déroutes,
L'avez-vous vu, cette nuit-là,
Quand il jeta la lune à bas . . . ?

When a human personage traverses these evocations, it is borne along in the same savage movement. Thus the weird story of *Le Sonneur*, thus the monotonous, threatening drone of *Les Mendiants*, thus the epic procession (*Le Départ*) of the men and the beasts marching from the hallucinated country-side to the tentacled city—the city whose soul Verhaeren has so fiercely materialized, with the ages weighing it down, whose frantic life he has rendered palpable (*Les Usines*, *La*

[1] The expression is due to Léon Bazalgette, introducer to the French public of Walt Whitman whose *Leaves of Grass* have influenced our contemporary social poetry.

Bourse) and whose prodigious contradictions he has grandiosely exalted.

This mad inspiration cracks the moulds of traditional poetry. Verhaeren's work would suffice to justify the necessity of free verse. Liberty is his sole demand—liberty in the rhythm as well as in the diction —no other form than that which will render his flashing vision more intensely. The force of the imagination imposes a rigorous unity upon these uneven stanzas, broken by abrupt recoils, heavy with haunting repetitions, which seem less to describe a landscape than to carry it completely away in this whirl of an impetuous torrent. Verhaeren vies with words the unleashed wind (*Le Vent*) and the swarming *Ame de la ville.*

His powerful imagination and his verbal wealth were equally adapted to the two inspirations; but he himself discovered something too passive in his exclusive realism. *Les Visages de la vie* and *Les Vignes de ma muraille* mark a reaction. The poet analyses himself more coldly:

Et tout à coup je m'apparais celui
Qui s'est, hors de soi-même, enfui
Vers le sauvage appel des forces unanimes.

(*La Foule.*)

In the crowd, in the cities, in the spectacle of the sea, in action, he calms his youthful madness. He discerns "Tabors" and "Canaans." He discovers the grandeur of goodness. In the breath of the wind he sees "the saints, the dead and the trees" become as one. He invites men to lean out of their windows

Pour voir enfin, dans le fond de la nuit,
Ce qui, depuis mille et mille ans,
S'efforce à naitre.

(*L'Eternelle Lueur.*)

It is a period of appeasement. It prolongs the first series of those *Heures* (*Les Heures claires*, 1896; *Les Heures d'après-midi*, 1905; *Les Heures du soir*, 1911) which mark three quiet wayside shrines in this fiery work. In the book dedicated "To her who lives by my side," Verhaeren lets his tenderness speak in accents musical and as if surprised at their own gentleness:

J'étais si lourd, si las,
J'étais si vieux de méfiance . . .
Je méritais si peu la merveilleuse joie
De voir tes pieds illuminer ma voie,
Que j'en reste tremblant encore et presque en pleurs
Et humble, à tout jamais, en face du bonheur.

It is not solely to the discovery of happiness, however, that he owes this enlargement of his art. The evolution of his thought contributed to it also. Already manifest in *Les Forces tumultueuses* which salutes the dawn of the new century, this progress will be marked definitively in *La Multiple Splendeur*. There is seen the passage from an imaginative pantheism to an intellectual conscious pantheism, the two mingled in this declaration:

Je ne distingue plus le monde de moi-même.

Doubtless the exposition of this faith will not always avoid the didactic stiffness which is the danger of all dogmatism; but what ample beauty will henceforth add itself to his conception of the universe:

L'infini tout entier transparaît sous les voiles
Que lui tissent les doigts des hivers radieux,
Et la forêt obscure et profonde des cieux
Laisse tomber sur nous son feuillage d'étoiles.

So that, studying the expansion of this considerable work in contemporary poetry,[1] we shall find again, even in *Hélène de Sparte*, the lyricism and the sovereign rhythm of the great poet of *Les Villages illusoires*.

8. FROM SYMBOLISM TO CLASSICISM

Symbolism had been characterized by a demand for the rights of poetic personality against the discipline which *Le Parnasse* had received from the classics and but slightly relaxed by a few Romantic innovations. The form of free verse, as soon became apparent, could nevertheless suit only certain temperaments and a limited number of subjects. We have seen Henri de Régnier evolving quietly, with aristocratic elegance, in the direction of classicism. Others showed less discretion. The most significant body of work produced by this return from Symbolism to the classical tradition is that of Jean Moréas.

Athenian by birth, Parisian by choice, Moréas had been one of the first and most active promoters of Symbolism. His initial volume, *Les Syrtes*, showed him a good pupil of Verlaine—the Verlaine of *La Chanson d'automne* (end of *La Carmencita*) and of *Les Fêtes galantes* (*Remembrances*)—a good pupil of Baudelaire also, of his artistic sensuality and of his melancholic Satanism.

Moréas sang then sweet nostalgic songs (*Parmi les marronniers*). He asserted the charm of the uneven in his sonnets of nine or eleven

[1] Chapter VIII.

syllables (*Les Roses jaunes, Les Bras qui se nouent*). In *Les Cantilènes*, side by side with rather conventional evocations of which *Le Ruffian* is the type or with the Oriental or mediæval legends of the *Airs et Récits*, he gave a place to magic songs of musical symbolism, like *Voix qui revenez . . .* and the sonnet *Et j'irai le long de la mer éternelle.* He reminded his companions in arms however that his country was

Là-bas où, sous les ciels attiques,
Les crépuscles radieux
Teignent d'amethyste les Dieux
Sculptes aux frises des portiques.

His bookish culture, his taste for archaisms led to odd mosaics of this sort:

La prime et l'ultime, et pennon
Où l'aure des Promesses joue,
Et mollette de bon renom
Brochant le Désir qui s'ébroue. . . .

He owed them the classical compactness of *Accalmie* or of this quatrain anticipating the *Stances:*

O mer immense, mer aux rumeurs monotones;
Tu berças doucement mes rêves printanniers;
O mer immense, mer perfide aux mariniers,
Sois clémente aux douleurs chastes de mes automnes.

The same year (1890) that Jean Moréas terminated *Le Pèlerin passionné*, he founded the *Ecole Romane* with Maurice du Plessys, Raymond de la Tailhède, Ernest Raynaud and Charles Maurras: two phases of the same movement. Doubtless there is still Symbolist music in *Le Pèlerin;* doubtless Moréas still employs free verse in the *Elégies* and the *Eglogues* and sometimes seeks perversely stumbling harmonies; but he had clearly taken sides against free verse "with exclusively material effects and illusory liberties": "My instinct had not been long in warning me that it was essential to return to true classicism and to true antiquity, as well as to the severest traditional versification; and, at the very height of the Symbolist triumph, I courageously separated from my friends."

Antiquity seen through the French tradition, it would be well to add. Moréas was nourished on our ancient literature, as proved by his *Contes de la vieille France,* the playful archaisms (*Dit d'un chevalier qui se souvient*) and the supple pictures of the Middle Ages which, in

Le Pèlegrin, contrast with the harshness of certain poems of repose (*Chœur*); but it is to the Pléiade he turns most readily, renewing its rhythms, its language and its themes:

C'est votre haleine fertile,
Sacrant ma bouche inutile,
Qui fait qu'indigne je sais,
De gentil son et haut style,
Hausser le Nombre Français (*Discours*).

However Moréas soon freed himself from the charm of Ronsard who does not let himself be imitated without some affectation, and Malherbe would have approved this stanza from the *Epitaphe de Verlaine:*

La forêt tour à tour se pare et se dépouille;
Après le beau printemps on voit l'hiver venir;
Et de la Parque aussi la fatale quenouille
Allonge un fil mêlé de peine et de plaisir.

By such verses, much more than by his *Iphigénie* after Euripides, a tragedy which does justice to the touching familiarity of the model but which, in spite of the flexibility of the choruses and the lyric passages (the heroine's farewell to life, end of act IV), throws into higher relief, in a desire for archaism, its insupportable moralizing loquacity, Moréas deserves to be called a classical French poet.

A great classical poet, the reader of *Les Stances* will add. Maurice Barrès has told how, on his death-bed, the poet denied the old distinction between the schools. "We shall never know," he adds, "what arguments Moréas might have given me, but I am of his opinion. I believe that a so-called romantic sentiment, if it be raised to a higher degree of culture, assumes a classic character. I have seen Moréas pass from one æsthetic to the other as he grew in moral nobility, and I am aware he found his artistic improvements in his heart grown wise." *Les Stances* offers this spectacle of the mind, master of itself, scanning the world firmly and sadly. He describes with an equal distinctness, the stronger for being contained in one or two perfect stanzas, the "trees of the city," those Parisian chestnut-trees of which he sang untiringly and the "mystic oaks," the olives of Cephisus which classical associations render doubly dear in his eyes, and the symbolic cypresses. For there is no landscape that he does not impregnate with his sentiments, fugitive beauty of which his thought does not eternalize.

Such a union confers its poignant beauty upon the supreme appeal of *Les Stances, Quand reviendra l'Automne* . . . and upon that vast, tranquilly desperate evocation, *Solitaire et pensif* . . .

There has been talk of Moréas' stoicism, he has been hailed as Vigny's successor. He has represented himself in this attitude of haughty despair:

Quand je viendrai m'asseoir dans le vent, dans la nuit,
Au bout du rocher solitaire,
Que je n'entendrai plus, en t'écoutant, le bruit
Que fait mon cœur sur cette terre,
Ne te contente pas, Océan, de jeter
Sur mon visage un peu d'écume:
D'un coup de lame alors il te faut m'emporter
Pour dormir dans ton amertume.

But, because he believed in creative power, he found in creation an ample consolation. The assurance that no man equals the poet and that he himself was a great poet he has expressed with a sometimes artless conceit.

His love of robust classical perfection had led him to that harmonious wisdom which dominates life, pacifying mind and heart reconciled in the grave beauty of a finished poem:

Ne dites pas: la vie est un joyeux festin;
Ou c'est d'un esprit sot ou c'est d'une âme basse.
Surtout ne dites point: elle est malheur sans fin;
C'est d'un mauvais courage et qui trop tôt se lasse.
Riez comme au printemps s'agitent les rameaux,
Pleurez comme la bise ou le flot sur la grève,
Goûtez tous les plaisirs et souffrez tous les maux
Et dites: c'est beaucoup et c'est l'ombre d'un rêve.

"To-day," remarked Moréas, "I have the pleasure of observing that everybody is coming back to the classic and to antiquity." If his example remains the most significant because it ends in *Les Stances* it was not, nevertheless, unique. Other poets announce diversely, at the height of Symbolism, a return to tradition. A disciple of the *Ecole Romane*, Raymond de la Tailhède merited the master's praises for the Ronsardism of the poem *De la Métamorphose des fontaines*. Robert de Montesquiou, in cultivating his *Hortensias bleus* and in mounting his *Perles rouges*, sought the approbation of the salons rather than that of the Symbolist writers. Fernand Séverin, poet of a literary Belgium, sang with restrained emotion:

Ce qu'il tient de douceur dans ce simple mot: vivre.

Louis le Cardonnel, friend of Mallarmé and Samain, sometimes used the free metres but it was in regular stanzas that he celebrated his dual inspiration and

Cette antique union du Poète et du Prêtre

which he revives in himself. Fernand Gregh whom a Verlainian *Menuet* made famous in 1896, aimed higher than this renown as a clever maker of pastiches. An agreeable facility enabled him to join to it the title of chief of "*Humanisme*" and to present, in *Les Clartés humaines* and *L'Or des minutes*, a loose synthesis of the ideas and the poetic forms of his epoch. Paul Souchon's *Elévations poétiques* owe their liquid ease to the personal influence of Samain and Règnier rather than to the Symbolist doctrine. As to Sébastien-Charles Leconte, his affinities are clearly Parnassian in form and Romantic in inspiration, and it would be unjust to pass over in silence the curious belated innovator, Louis Ménard, assembling in one volume his *Poèmes et Rêveries d'un paien mystique*. Indefatigable seeker in the *Etudes de prosodie*, a spelling-reformer, he spent his whole soul and his whole talent in reviving ancient myths, from Prometheus to Julian:

Dieus eureux, qu'adorait le jeunesse du monde,
Qe blasfème aujourd'hui la vieille umanité,
Laissez-moi me baigner dans la source féconde
Où la divine Hellas trouve la vérité.

It was equally on the edge of Symbolism that Auguste Angellier appeared. Coming late to the poetic art and by a conscious desire rather than by an instinctive urge, he patiently forged his own instrument; and perhaps, in the course of the long dialogues situated *Dans la lumière antique*, this professor who bore witness, in his English studies, to a keen sense of the concrete, yielded to the temptation of an eloquence more massively Roman than subtly Hellenic; but *A l'Ami perdu* (*Amissæ Amicæ*, says the dedication with a touch of learned preciousness) presents the story of a noble drama of love pursued from happiness to sacrifice and, what is rare, to virile acceptance. This sonnet sequence is not without a certain monotony but its severity sometimes relaxes in delicate meditations (*Les Caresses des yeux*), in refined touches of tenderness, in accents of pathetic simplicity where the poet confesses:

Le besoin de dormir sur une épaule humaine . . .

in flights of sober lyricism, such as the sonnet, *O mer, mer immense.*

By these pieces of a grave beauty, Angellier joins the classical line of which he has piously renewed the immortal theme:.

Que ce sonnet ressemble aux galères royales
Qui traînent sur les flots des velours frangés d'or . . .

Charles Guérin's work reflects exactly the aspirations of the poets who made their début at the end of the nineteenth century. The Symbolist doctrine having become exhausted without any other taking its place, those who did not feel for classic art the exclusive affection of a Moréas hesitated among the various influences. Guérin shows traces of Hérédia, of Samain and especially of Jammes to whom he addressed an elegy which is probably his masterpiece. *Le Cœur solitaire* interprets his need of a faith:

Et je veux, en dépit de la Mort souveraine,
Affirmer qu'il est beau de vivre et d'être fort.

He also expresses in the "impassioned melancholies" his doubt as to Love and his "anxiety concerning God." *Le Semeur de cendres* proves he had reached both a religious and an artistic assurance. In *L'Homme intérieur*, after a last melancholy look at love, Guérin hints at a touching regret for the time of his first poetic innocence, before he had "confined" his inspiration in "strict words." The analysis which brought him back to his religion seems, indeed, to have blunted his creative faculty and he died at the age of thirty-three, without having realized the great work promised by his first poems.

9. THE SYMBOLIST DRAMA

The Symbolist drama has remained, in its ensemble, exclusively literary. *Phocas le Jardinier*, *Polyphème* and *Le Cloître* are works of poets rather than of dramatists. Gourmont's plays, *Théodat* and *Lilith*, are the refined fantasies of a very intelligent and very sensual scholar who delights in ingenious critical variations. Wilde's *Salome* offers a documentary savour seasoned with the excesses of a foreigner. Even the characterized parodies, *Ubi roi* and *Ubu enchainé*, truculent farces in which, by means of barrack-room jokes, Alfred Jarry drew an emblematic figure of contemporary stupidity, become completely interesting only when read.

A man appeared however as the creator of a Symbolist drama. Octave Mirbeau's enthusiastic welcome has remained famous: "I know nothing of Maurice Maeterlinck. . . I know only that no man is more unknown than he; and I know too he has written a masterpiece." This "masterpiece" was *La Princesse Maleine*. Much fun has since been made of that article, as also of the critics who claimed to find in Maeterlinck's first plays all the situations both of ordinary drama and of vaudeville. Perhaps however these two attitudes were justified by the blend of novelty and artifice presented by this "puppet theatre."

Maurice Maeterlinck had begun with a volume of verse, *Les Serres*

chaudes, where he endeavoured, in a fusion of concrete and abstract and in a tone of obstinate incantation, to whisper words linked by haunting associations, to translate the complex languor of souls awaiting a mysterious deliverance:

Mon âme en est triste à la fin;
Elle est triste enfin d'être lasse,
Elle est lasse enfin d'être en vain.
Elle est triste et lasse à la fin
Et j'attends vos mains sur ma face

(*Ame de Nuit.*)

Perhaps we should be tempted, to-day, to be unjustly severe for these *lieder*, feeling in them the trick to which numerous poets have had recourse without confessing their indebtedness to them. The same scruple would be felt before *La Princesse Maleine* had not the author, in the preface to his dramatic works, forestalled us: "It would have been easy to suppress in *La Princesse Maleine* many dangerous naïvetés, some useless scenes and the major part of those astonished repetitions which give the characters the air of slightly deaf somnambulists constantly awakened from a painful dream. I might thus have spared them some smiles, but the atmosphere and even the landscape where they live would have appeared changed." To enjoy *La Princesse Maleine* to-day one must indeed pass over the made-to-order Shakespearianisms, overlook the puerilities, the "*Ma-aleine est ma-alade*" of the little Allan (one of those terrible "*clairvoyants*" of Maeterlinck's plays), the interminable, incoherent conversations in which the characters bear witness, insatiably, to their "slightly haggard idea of the Universe." Then it will be possible to recognize the magic power of the fourth act where the two royal accomplices assassinate the princess.

It must be admitted that these plays have considerably aged. Artifice is rampant in them. There are too many old towers, doves, symbolic keys, unhealthy castles, factitious oppositions where the sea, the wind and the light play rôles devoid of mystery; too many falsely naïve "you are beautifuls!" and soul kisses and popular songs suddenly illuminated with a profound meaning. Nothing is more uneven than this dialogue stammering and maxims of mystic philosophy alternate, where barbarousness adorns itself with painfully ingenuous euphuisms. Beginning with *L'Intruse* the methods reveal themselves brutally mechanical. In *Les Aveugles* they are already frankly unbearable. Preoccupied by the presence of death which "fills all the interstices of the poem," Maeterlinck essays to create an atmosphere where life

feels this shadow weighing upon it. The difficulty was to vary this evocation. He did not succeed. Or rather he succeeded only in the places where he has made this menace hover over beings sufficiently characterized for them to move us personally. It is not the symbolism which touches us in *Alladine et Palomides* or *La Mort de Tintagiles*, dramas of love and of fright.

Pelléas et Mélisande requires to be placed apart. This drama has the same defects as its predecessors; but the intervention of a musical genius has shown, better than any literary criticism, how what it lacked to be ranked as a masterpiece could be supplied by a recreative effort which should humanize intimations so vague they might equally well be called sublime or childish, which should transform inconsistent phantoms into living creatures; and *Pelléas* marks a progress in Maeterlinck's art by the presence of Arkel, of a conscient being, in the midst of these victims of fatality.

Maeterlinck has himself signalized this evolution with reference to *Aglavaine et Sélysette:* "There," he says, "I should have wished death to yield to love, to wisdom or to happiness a part of its power. It did not obey me." What matter? The important thing is that unanimous acquiescence in the caprices of an unknown fatality has been succeeded by an effort at comprehension, although isolated and inefficacious. Drama really begins that day only when man looks destiny in the face, even should he be obliged to bow to it afterwards with melancholy like Arkel and Aglavaine, both equally powerless to avert the foreseen catastrophe. This new conviction on Maeterlinck's part explains the character of the plays which follow. For five of Bluebeard's wives deliverance is useless; but Ariane truly escapes. *Sœur Béatrice* proves further that an equal mystery resides in love and in hatred; but Monna Vanna and Prinzivalle are united in love by the most paradoxical of routes, and Marco—a stoic Arkel—approves of Vanna: "You have done the impossible. . . It is just and unjust, as all one does. . . And life is right."

This change of perspective in Maeterlinck's drama corresponds to a development in his thought. His first collection of essays, *Le Trésor des humbles*, clearly indicates in what state of mind his plays were conceived. The most urgent task seemed to him "the awakening of the Soul." How absent the soul was, according to him, from certain masterpieces: "If Racine is the infallible poet of woman's heart, who would dare tell us he has ever made a step towards her soul?" To provoke its awakening among contemporaries, he appealed to the great mystics of the past, to Novalis, to Ruysbroeck, to Emerson whom he had studied and translated. He repeated Carlyle's advice, that one

must plunge back into silence to hear there anew the great voices of invisible goodness and profound life which will reveal the sources of daily tragedy and of inner beauty. A noble program which *Le Trésor des humbles* stated in a fraternally penetrating and convincingly eloquent prose; but it ended in a failure, since this mystical retirement into the depths of the soul forbade the habitual communications between beings. Maeterlinck admitted it, confronted with the impossibility of erecting a mystical morality: "It is not possible to speak of these things because one is too much alone."

"I have never placed myself across the path of a destiny," said Arkel. "We have not the right to weigh the destiny of others," echoed Aglavaine; but old Meligrane's voice rose in its turn: "It is not always the finest truths which prevail against simpler, older truths." Until then Maeterlinck's plays had confined themselves to representing a struggle between destinies. He had now to enlarge it enough to depict the conflict between opposing wisdoms. He convinced himself, at the same time, that the affirmations of *Le Trésor des humbles* were not adequate, that he must submit to the patient exploration of the soul by intelligence, to its slow, groping definition by means of language. After *Le Trésor des humbles* he found, spontaneously, stoic accents in which to speak to the universe. Two years later, he published *La Sagesse et la Destinée*, a book completely impregnated with Marcus Aurelius in which, however, he by no means renounced his effort to evoke the inexpressible in the soul: "All inner life," he declared, "begins less at the moment of the development of intelligence than at that when the soul becomes good." Destiny is neither just nor unjust. It merely brings us an invitation "to judge ourselves" and to identify ourselves "with the secret will of life" to the extent of deciding frankly that "whatever happens will be happiness." His dramatic essays followed the same curve. They have been reproached, from a strictly scenic point of view, with their character of philosophical dialogues and with those long dialogues in blank verse which sometimes weary the spectator's ear. We shall do them justice if we discern in them the idealized stages in the progress of his thought, if we hear in the "There are no dead" of *L'Oiseau bleu* the negation of the first nightmares which haunted the author of *La Princesse Maleine* and the supreme deliverance of one of the noblest seekers after truth of our epoch.

10. SCHWOB AND GOURMONT

Long before the harmonious phrases of *Le Trésor des humbles* and *La Sagesse et la Destinée* had found an echo in souls, Symbolism already counted two prose-writers who, by the extent of their culture, by the

union in their works of the creative gift and of the critical faculty, deserve to be considered the directors of its literary conscience.

It is by *Spicilège* that Marcel Schwob should be approached to grasp the diversity and the strength of his mind. One will admire the fineness of his psychological essays on Laughter or Perversity. One will appreciate the ease of his erudition in the studies on Greek courtesans (*Plangón et Bacchis*) or the Christian legends (*Saint Julien l'Hospitalier*). One will see him sympathetically hospitable to every greatness, revealing to the French the great Meredith "giving the spectacle of the most prodigious intellectual function of this century." One will feel what pleasure this historian-artist had in studying, apropos of François Villon, the "jargon of the *coquillards*" and resurrecting that confused life. One will recognize the perfection attained by this universal curiosity in the dialogues on love, art and anarchy. Nothing is more finished than the first of these conversations where, in an atmosphere of Platonic poetry and of Socratic irony, a host, momentarily transformed into an actor of the Middle Ages, examines with his guests (who incarnate, under the names of Hylas, Herr Baccalaureus, Rodion Raskolnikoff and Sir Willoughby, lessons of antique materialism, Mephistophelian logic, Dostoïevsky and Meredith) the question whether women can be called the puppets or shadows of love.

In the study on Robert Louis Stevenson, Schwob indicates the predecessors who have most struck his imagination: Villon with his gallows-birds, Shakespeare whose Falstaff "gives up the ghost like an old pirate," Poe and the skull nailed to a tree in *The Gold Bug*, the narratives of filibusters. He unites in the same respect Odysseus, Robinson Crusoe, Arthur Gordon Pym and Captain Kidd; and if he praises Stevenson, it is to praise above all the "romanticism of his realism."

Indefatigable reader, relentless worker, passionately fond of history, languages, chemistry and astrology, master of several ancient and modern languages, translator of Shakespeare and Defoe, Schwob put this formidable erudition at the service of his imagination as a story-teller. We have seen to whom his preferences were given. They were not exclusive. If he announced that the novel should become "a novel of adventure," the volume entitled *La Lampe de Psyché* shows that this saying should be taken "in the largest sense." *La Croisade des enfants* and *L'Etoile de bois* tell two simple legends with sober precision. *Mimes* revives in a series of exquisite genre pictures an antique life idealized with refinement. *Le Livre de Monelle* finally remains a breviary of all the influences which acted upon Symbolist sensibility. In each of these varied evocations his talent unites the same descriptive firmness with the same pensive grace.

His most precious originality is, however, revealed in the numerous stories of *Cœur double*, of *Le Roi au masque d'or* and of the *Vies imaginaires*. Each book is preceded by a preface in which he analyses his art. As early as 1891, he announced that "pseudo-scientific descriptions, the display of handbook psychology and ill-digested biology" would be banished from fiction. He recalled that "the heart of man is double. In it selfishness balances charity. In it the person is the counterpoise of the masses." Humanity advances "by the road of history from terror to pity." There is adventure or crisis "every time the double oscillation of the outer world and the inner world brings about an encounter." The task of art will be to describe these adventures, to paint men involved in these crises. Now to paint is to express at the same time both resemblances and differences. The preface to *Le Roi au masque d'or* insists more upon resemblance: "I have written a book in which there are masks and covered faces: a king masked with gold, a savage with a furry snout, Italian tramps with plague-stricken faces and French tramps with false faces, galley-slaves helmeted with red, young girls suddenly grown old in a mirror, and a singular crowd of lepers, embalmers, eunuchs, assassins, demoniacs and pirates, among whom I pray the reader to believe I have no preference, being certain they are not so different." In the introduction to *Vies imaginaires* he stresses, on the contrary, the differences: "Art is the opposite of general ideas, describing only the individual, desiring only the unique. It does not classify, it declassifies. . . Old Hokusaï saw clearly one must succeed in individualizing what is most general. . . Boswell had not the æsthetic courage to choose. The biographer's art resides precisely in choice." The truth is that in his eyes "difference and resemblance are points of view," that Schwob finally reconciles this apparent antimony in the Jewish conception of an indestructible divine unity: "We are words, but joined in the phrase of the universe, itself joined to the glorious period which is one in its thought."

We have quoted his own summary of *Le Roi au masque d'or*. It will give some idea of the world of characters which troop through such a book. Each volume of stories contains the same wealth of human history from the most remote times to the present. His gifts as an animator never fail. In them reigns, declares Léon Daudet, "a perfect taste, never a false step, or a surcharge." Even if the subject chosen leaves us indifferent, the minute execution forces our admiration. In the mediæval narratives, particularly, the reader will sometimes incline to Paul Valéry's attitude: "Marcel Schwob's astonishing conversation won me to his own charm more than to its sources. I drank

as long as it lasted . . . I did not feel for the erudition all the fervour due it." There is erudition, above all, in *Blanche la sanglante* or *Les Faux Saulniers;* but even there, where the care for historic reconstitution a little overweighs the human interest, the touch keeps a rare distinctness, equally happy whether Schwob faithfully follows the tradition (*Clodia*) or amuses himself in opposing it (*Pétrone*). His art is equal to any mystery, whether in *La Cité dormante, Les Embaumeuses* or *Les Faulx Visages.* He plays upon the sombrest sentiments of the soul, the terror of *La Peste* and of *La Charrette,* the gruesome humour of *Un Squelette* (very superior to the imitations of Mark Twain in *Sur les dents* and *L'Homme gras*), the awakening of instinct in criminals (*Cruchette, Crève-Cœur*) which conduct the reader to evocations of the guillotine (*Fleur de cinq pierres, Instantanées*) and to presentiments of *La Terre future;* the fantastically tragic (*Le train 081*) ending in the most lyrical lunacy (*Arachné, Béatrice*). He excels equally in vast syntheses where the portrait of a man of thought sums up the picture of a whole epoch (*Empédocle, Lucrèce*) and in stories of piracy told with a dry irony of which *MM. Burke et Hare, assassins,* offers the most successful example. Like Villiers, he levies upon the latest discoveries of science (*La Machine à parler*) and of applied psychology (*L'Homme double, L'Homme voilé*). He utilizes so-called subversive doctrines in that *Ile de la liberté* where Gourmont saw the witty statement of "fakerism-anarchy"; but perhaps his most admirable stories are those he situates outside of historic times, the powerful visions of *L'Incendie terrestre* and *La Vendeuse d'ambre,* the grandiose *Roi au masque d'or* which his symbolism dates without weakening it, and that dense masterpiece, *La Mort d'Odjigh.* All—even the most insignificant as to subject—will be preserved from oblivion by the perfection of a style at once simple and full, mellow and rich, without useless ornaments. If allegorical figures were still the fashion, one would like to imagine, on the threshold of his work, as his worthiest Muse, the woman he has described in two fragrant sentences: "Her breasts were supported by a red strophe and the soles of her sandals were perfumed. For the rest, she was beautiful and long of body, and very desirable in colour."

Criticism seems then, with Marcel Schwob, to have been the artist's very intelligent auxiliary. It is rather the reverse that should be said of Remy de Gourmont as moreover of Sainte-Beuve; but, whereas Joseph Delorme retired with Amaury into a critical episcopacy, Gourmont never renounced the ambitions of the creator: "I am haunted by the technique of the unknown masterpiece," he confesses in

the preface to the book in which he recounts the adventures of Antiphilos among men. Now all his imaginative works, from *Sixtine*, a "novel of the cerebral life" and the unactable *Lilith* to the inconceivable *Lettres d'un satyre*, belie this hope of liberation in spontaneous invention. Gourmont's talent remains incontestable but he exceeds his domain. The *Histoires magiques*, the stories in *Un Pays lointain* and *Couleurs* offer us not so much veritable narratives as the delicate fantasies of a writer letting his fancy play about indefinite ideas or sweet past things, already a little faded. *Une nuit au Luxembourg* is only a subtle play upon the strings of curiosity. The allegories of *Le Pèlerin du silence*, the verses of *Le Livre des Litanies*, the poems of *Simone* appear to us to-day very ingenious pastiches of a superannuated art whose cleverness we can admire all the more because it troubles us with no emotion. Even the most successful of these attempts, *Les Chevaux de Diomède*, bears the mark of time. We no longer believe in the superior airs of the hero going through his evolutions in a factitious harem. In the finest chapters of complicated passion (*Les Mains*, *Les Marronniers*), we are too aware of the intervention of the puppet showman ready to dissect these fictions, to reveal, beneath their passions, the instincts which decoy them. Not that this presence of the ego is odious. It expresses itself sometimes in charming sallies: "Diomède, are you ready to follow your theories to the end?" "To the end? No, not to-day. It is too far"; but verisimilitude suffers from it as does our belief in the reality of the characters. Perhaps the balance between the creator's rights and those of his creations is particularly difficult for so conscious a writer to attain. When Gourmont warns us that "in this book which is a little novel of possible adventures, thought, act, dream, sensuality are exhibited on the same plane and analysed with the same goodwill," he touches the point where the novel is on the eve of becoming an essay. Does he not go beyond it when he adds that "all manifestations of human activity seem quite equivalent," when he writes as a motto for each of the chapters the sentence with which he is most satisfied, when he transforms sensuality into sickly erotomania?

In so subtle a work, interest, however, does not flag. If it turns from the illusory actors, it is to concentrate upon the personality of the author. Gourmont, who entitled his poems *Divertissements*, was too perspicacious not to know that the same title would suit all his imaginative works. Questioning himself he would doubtless have recognized that his desire for artistic creation was only one of the forms of that need for love which obsessed him. The problem of love haunted Remy de Gourmont. On several occasions he sought to solve it. In

La Physique de l'amour, an "essay on the sexual instinct," he brings a scientific precision to the study of the organs of love and the mechanism of love in animals and in man whom he restores to his place in the scale of creation. The *Lettres à l'amazone* continue the same analysis from another point of view: "To speak of love with a young woman is one of the pleasures of our delicate civilization." He abandons himself to it entirely, speaking at length of chastity, naked love, pleasure, desire. To his erudition he adds the refined art which permits him to say delicate truths brutally and brutal truths delicately. He deploys his coquetry for a friend whose mind he pretends to love no less than her heart. Suddenly he believes himself liberated: "And then, resurrected Amazon, I desire seriously but one thing, to offer you my happy egotism"—a sentiment which, were it true, would be odious; but it too is a snare, and again lassitude returns: "Then I shall go just like another by the roads and the inns towards the end of the world, which is the nearest shore." A drama without conclusion. From *Le Fantôme* and *Les Oraisons mauvaises* where he perversely drowned love in liturgical evocations, to *Un Cœur virginal*, the story of a young girl which, he says in the preface, must certainly be called "a physiological novel," Remy de Gourmont remained haunted by the obsession of love, of its realities, of its depravities, of its simplicity and of its mystery. He explained it to others a hundred times. Did he convince himself? It may be doubted. For, according to his brother's remark, "nothing entered his intelligence save caressed by his sensibility." At least, if this aspiration for unsatisfied voluptuousness paralysed his creative expansion, it sustained in his mind the insatiable curiosity of a lively critic and of a penetrating dissociator of ideas who, in his charming *Lettres à Sixtine*, was at once lover and "flute-player."

He has strongly expressed the necessity for this alliance of body and brain in his three essential works, *La Culture des idées*, *Le Chemin de velours* and *Le Problème du style:* "We write as we feel, as we think, with our whole body. Intelligence is but a form of sensibility . . . For all is interdependent and intellectual ease is certainly connected with liberty of sensation. He who cannot feel everything cannot understand everything, and not to understand everything is to understand nothing." On this point he shows himself unyielding. "If you do not take, in handling ideas, a physical pleasure akin to caressing a shoulder or a piece of stuff, leave ideas alone." Not that he was unaware of the dangers of his method. He knew the seduction of admitted truths, "commonplaces not yet dissociated," of those precise, clear expressions which "have no meaning, are affirmative gestures suggesting obedience, and that is all." He admitted the difficulties of com-

plexity: "To explain a straw, the whole universe must be taken to pieces." He refused to bow before the dogma of the immutability of ideas: "Believe, and believe also when I tell you the contrary; for it is not necessary always to believe the same thing"; but he rejected the charge of paradox: "I never made one deliberately. However, I do not claim to dictate judgments upon myself. A mind of some boldness will always seem paradoxical to timid minds. One must accept the rules of the game of thought with all its consequences." He was firmly persuaded that the game of thought necessitated this lucid interrogatory of all reality by the whole being, this minute "dissociation of ideas" of which he could say: "It strengthens the muscles, it calms the pulse . . . it is a method of deliverance."

This anti-bookish, concrete method Gourmont practised for years. Twenty volumes of chronicles (*Epilogues, Promenades littéraires, Promenades philosophiques, Dialogues des amateurs etc.*), vouch for its efficacy. In them Gourmont fully attains his object which is "to make things known much rather than to appreciate them authoritatively." He brings the same competence to the discussion of Quinton's theories or to reconstituting a story of adultery—the same ease in arranging his memories of Symbolism and in defending the services the Jesuits have rendered civilization, in spite of their blemishes. His erudition finds an outlet in connection with Huysmans' *La Cathédrale* or with a thesis on medical psychology. He will show a Swiftian irony in the *Conseils familiers à un jeune écrivain* and a smiling tenderness in speaking of women, from the instant when the "amphora becomes once more a beautiful young girl with throbbing bosom and anxious eyes." He will show all the wealth of his thought in a fragment like that *Sur la hierarchie intellectuelle.* He will lucidly defend his masters, Villiers and Mallarmé, and will be able, speaking of Verlaine, to maintain an equal distance from idolatry and pedantic vulgarity. An article such as *Psychologie Nouvelle* will show his sympathy for the young writers. Capable of judging his contemporaries with a penetrating gaze in the two *Livres des masques*, it will please him, in the *Dialogues des amateurs*, to comment day by day upon contemporary events in the manner of Anatole France whose learned grace he does not possess but whom he far surpasses in originality and penetrating insight.

One subject in particular held his attention: the life of words, for which his stay at the Bibliothèque Nationale had perhaps increased his love. He believed in their power: "Pay attention to the words which rise and live, to improvised evocations, to creative incantations, pay attention to the logic of speech. All syllables are not vain." In composing articles on linguistics, *Le Latin mystique, L'Esthétique de la*

langue française, Le Problème, du style, he paid a debt of gratitude: "Words have perhaps given me more numerous and more decisive joys than ideas"; but there again he kept his independence and, in refuting Albalat's affirmations even to the extent of grammatical subtleties, he declared his aim was "rather to develop five or six motives for not believing in rhetorical receipts."

He continued to the end of the task he had assigned himself. His war articles have been collected in *Les idées du jour* and *Pendant l'orage.* He was one of those rare writers not blinded by the catastrophe. He knew that, in the human tragedy, peace was never perhaps more an entr'acte: "It is so difficult to be a true neutral," he added, "that perhaps it is better to be a belligerent." He kept his hope no less high on that account, for "life is an act of confidence"—a fine reply to those who had not understood that his negations drew their force, not from scepticism but from a methodical reclassification of ideas after their dissociation. Doubtless he had sometimes carried experimentation so far as to "side with the instinctive creature against the rational creature whose reason is so limited." His faith in the law of intellectual and sentimental constancy, based upon Quinton's scientific investigations which he has developed in the *Epilogues,* permitted him to give free play to his intelligence with the tranquil assurance it would not founder and never abdicate. Thereby he lives, even for those whose intellectual development for twenty-five years has not been aided by his chronicles in *Le Mercure,* a great humanist and a very precious thinking-master.

11. CONCLUSION

The importance of Symbolism comes out clearly at the end of this study. It has been the most fertile literary movement of these last fifty years. Its own contribution has been considerable. It is necessary to go back to the Romantic era to find such a flowering of great works, a similar commotion of sensibility and of intelligence.

This statement, however, is not sufficient. Symbolism, in fact, achieved the overthrow of Naturalism. Even the supreme partisans of that form of art have felt its influence and Zola's last novels bear its mark. The reawakening of Romanticism occurred in its shadow. There is something of Banville and of Hugo in Rostand's plays, but there is also a desire for symbols which, even if ineffectual, possesses an evidential value. Symbolism was followed by a classical reaction. Who will deny that this neo-classicism owes Symbolism however an understanding of the complexity of the world and of the value of language for musically transposing its mystery, which would be vainly

sought in the masters of the seventeenth century? It is fitting, finally, to recall here that the chain was not always suddenly broken, that several great writers of to-day began in the age of Symbolism the lessons of which have spared them useless gropings, that André Gide was the friend of the Symbolist poets, that Paul Claudel and Paul Valéry have never denied their debt of gratitude to Rimbaud and Mallarmé.[1]

[1] It seems difficult to close this chapter—which is, in large part, that of the *Mercure de France*—without recalling the effort of Jules de Gaultier "to put into the hands of a few an apparatus of mental optics," in describing (*De Kant à Nietzsche*) the duel of the Vital Instinct and the Instinct of Knowledge, in studying, with *"Bovarysme,"* "the power given man to conceive himself other than he is . . . the method of inventing the real."

CHAPTER VII

TRADITIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

THE title of this chapter may seem arbitrary. It is merely intended to give strong relief to an incontestable fact. The French conscience was violently shaken during the last years of the nineteenth century and this crisis made itself felt in our literary history. Until then writers had, on the whole, neglected political propaganda. Whatever their private preferences, they had not undertaken systematic criticism of the ideas which sprang from the Revolution and to which, with varying insistence, different régimes laid claim after 1830. We have been able to study in Daudet and Goncourt two aspects of Naturalism, in Kahn and Régnier two representatives of symbolism, without the examination of their political and religious convictions having to influence a picture of their literary activity. This attitude would be impossible in dealing with the Barrès of *Les Déracinés*, or the France of *L'Histoire contemporaine*.

It must here be recalled then that the last teachings of Taine and Renan, the reawakening of mysticism, the Boulangist and Panamist agitations had concurred in disturbing a great number of minds as to the value of the revolutionary ideas which had resulted in the establishment of a republic more and more clearly orientated towards democracy and free thought. The Dreyfus Affair came to offer those who were alarmed at this development, as well as those who approved it, the opportunity of taking sides actively and combatively: "This great Affair," wrote Maurras in the preface to his *Politique religieuse* (1912) "has really been the soul and, so to speak, the demon of our public life for the past fifteen years." We shall not speak of the writers who did not enter the struggle or who made in it merely an episodical appearance of no importance for the general line of their work; but we shall range here, in two categories convenient because of their general character, those who henceforward subordinated their creations to social propagandist ends.

1. COUNTER-REVOLUTION AND NATURALISM

The first effect of this crisis of conscience showed itself in notorious conversions to Catholicism. We know that, as early as 1895, Huys-

mans was "*en route*" and that Coppée re-entered the fold of the Church in 1898 after political mortifications and a serious illness. Brunetière, believing he had proved "the bankruptcy of science," stated the problem *La Science et la Religion* (1897) to solve it in favour of the latter; but the most "illustrious conquest of faith," the most complete representative of the new doctrine, is Paul Bourget.

He has himself traced his evolution in the preface to *Pages de critique et de doctrine*, dedicated to Jules Lemaître who had abandoned Serenus and Myrrha to fling himself into the fray: "This book will have an interest for you. It reveals a line of thought very analogous to that which you have yourself followed. We have both grown up in the atmosphere and in the spirit of the Revolution and we have both come to traditional conclusions which would have greatly astonished our professors." The reason for this reaction is that "the youth of our generation had received from their elders two directing ideas about which their intelligence was necessarily to reconstruct the whole apparatus of French truths." These two ideas are "the idea of law" and a "view of literature considered as a living psychology." Taine, towards whom Bourget's fidelity never flinches, led his disciples, in part unconsciously, to recover "above, or better below the literary phenomenon, the great laws of national health." Bourget did not believe that one should state these great laws in critical essays only or in prefaces to works little known to his predecessors. He thought they should be the sources of the novelist's inspiration. Adrien Sixte's prayer having been answered, ten years before the publication of the *Pages*, Bourget had composed *L'Etape*.

The spiritual hero of *L'Etape*, Victor Ferrand, cross-eyed like Taine, is moreover a "disciple of Bonald and of Le Play who remains, since the death of his elders, MM. Ollé-Laprune and Charpentier, one of the most conspicuous chiefs of the Catholic philosophy in the University." He is "not only a traditionalist in religion. He is one in politics also and does not speak of the Revolution without employing Le Play's formula on the false dogmas of '89." He proclaims that "all the laws upon which we have been living for a hundred years are laws of pride." At the moment of the Affair, "his lucid, wise genius" ranged him in the anti-Dreyfus camp. The author drives home his charge, declares that "France is burying herself in Jacobin parliamentarism," under the guidance of "those elected by universal suffrage, that is to say, a majority of charlatans sprung from a majority of ignoramuses." To the sophisms which engender anarchy, he opposes "the conjunction of an Auguste Comte and of a Bonald, of a Taine

and of a Joseph de Maistre in theories of government identical at bottom" and also "the power of total interpretation of human life possessed by Catholicism."

The traditionalist Ferrand, born of a family of rich Angevin landowners, is a professor of philosophy, occupies a fine apartment in the Rue de Tournon and his daughter possesses all the feminine virtues. The Jacobin Monneron, son of a poor farmer of Quintenas in Ardèche, is a professor of rhetoric, inhabits a horrible building in the Rue Claude-Bernard. His daughter lets herself be seduced. The eldest of his three sons is a forger, the second a blackguard and the only one who remains honest aspires to conversion. The difference between these two families Victor Ferrand thus explains to Jean Monneron: "Your grandfather and your father believed it was possible to *bruler l'étape*. It is not." The whole novel is devoted to this practical demonstration, destined to illustrate the truth that one should not talk of reconciling Catholicism, Science and Democracy, as if the last two terms were on one side, the first on the other. Quite the contrary it is the first two terms which are on one side and it is the last which is on the other."

What remains of *L'Etape* and its successors, *Un Divorce* and *L'Emigré*, in which Bourget continued to put his talent at the service of his social convictions? He has not succeeded in constructing the ambitious synthesis he attempted. The most rapid analysis shows the arbitrary element in *L'Etape*. In spite of an evident effort at impartiality to which credit should be given, Bourget cannot forget the party spirit which renders the character of the father Monneron so inconceivably grotesque in certain places and which urges the author to accuse his adversaries of treating their contradictors like "common malefactors" on the very page where he has just insulted the revolutionary Chamfort. If we are authorized to infer from the Monneron case that a Jacobin orator will always marry the first girl he meets, will his enemies have the right to draw from the Ferrand example the general conclusion that Providence renders Christian philosophers widowers early enough for their daughters' education to benefit by it? *L'Etape* suffers from this confusion between the sermon and the work of art. It is often very tiresome, the studious heaviness of the sociologist being still further weighted by an obstinate desire for descriptions of soul-states, of streets, of furniture wherein Bourget undertakes to reconcile, under the ægis of Bonald, the opposite manners of Stendhal and Balzac. He succeeds so well that, when the reader finishes this luxuriant book in which he has gone hurriedly through the

passages considered essential by Bourget, he carries away, with the memory of some episodical characters rather delicately drawn, the impression of a solidly constructed melodrama.

This tendency of Bourget's ideas to express themselves scenically has led him to the theatre which he has furnished, in addition to an adaptation of *Un Divorce*, with original plays, the Sorelian *Barricade* and *Le Tribun*. As indicated by their subtitles, these "chronicles of 1910 and 1911" aim at painting the social movement of our epoch; but the form excluded those long analyses in which Bourget has delighted throughout his work, and he came back to the novel in *Le Démon de midi* (1914), his best book since *Le Disciple*. In this ample fresco of contemporary life, where modernist silhouettes mingle with our old friends, Crémieu-Dax and Abbé Chanut, he has sought less the triumph of the ideas in favour of which the novelist remains always suspect of having falsified the normal development of the beings he imagines. He has energetically represented two forms of "the aberration of middle life, of the noonday demon" in an action where psychology and religious experience unite naturally, in a soul crisis enhanced by an intellectual and dramatic interest. Doubtless even in this last book will be found the rather conventional phrases whereby Bourget's aristocratic admirations express themselves sincerely and also that demonstrative apparatus which weighs down all his creations by substituting for the spontaneous play of life an activity too conscientiously commentated not at times to be dampened by it; but the noble figures of Louis Savignan, of Geneviève Calvières and of the Abbot Fauchon dominate the moving tragedy of their destinies and justify the lofty human lesson which Bourget draws from the ruin of their ephemeral happiness: "One must live as one thinks; if not, sooner or later, one ends by thinking as one has lived." Neither his war novels, rather cheaply pathetic, nor *L'Ecuyère* which should have remained a serial and never become a book, have added anything to the solid reputation of the author of *Le Démon de midi*.

For those who went no farther than the external aspect of his work, Barrès would, after 1897, have been one of the chiefs of conservative doctrinairism. We have already indicated on his own authority the itinerary which led him from "The dead poison us!" of *L'Ennemi des lois* to the capital affirmation of *L'Appel au soldat:* "Every living being is born of a race, a soil, an atmosphere, and genius manifests itself as such only in proportion as it is closely linked with its land and its dead." The three volumes of *Le Roman de l'énergie nationale* involve, among other things, the adventures of seven young Lorrains uprooted

by the false university culture. They also describe the general uneasiness and the disorders of a France no longer submitted to the "national instinct." The "nationalistic socialism" which Barrès had formerly associated with his Boulangism did not withstand events. The Dreyfus affair cast him among the conservatives on whom he pretended to have forced the rôle Disraeli had made the Tories play. Rooted in his Lorraine he wrote *Les Amitiés françaises*, his nationalistic *Emile* and *Les Bastions de l'Est*. In *Au Service de l'Allemagne*, the Alsatian Ehrmann, "advance-guard of the Latin race," resisted the temptation to desert his post and defended French honour even in the German barracks. The Metz girl, *Colette Baudoche*, triumphed in a subtler episode of the same struggle against the invader. Barrès' name had become as closely associated as Déroulède's with the idea of the "*revanche*."

By 1900 he had formulated all the dogmas of traditionalism, said that "society was beautiful only when it opposed nature," called intelligence—"that very little thing on the surface of ourselves"—impotent, given a long lesson of return to the land and to the dead in "the Valley of the Moselle." He had scoffed at parliamentarism and recognized that "Catholicism is above all a maker of order." Nothing should then, in appearance, be easier than to represent him, like Bourget or Maurras, in the reflective attitude he had chosen and sanctioned by years of political action. That such a portrait is impossible proves at once the originality of his thought and his real greatness as an artist.

Barrès has shown us very abundantly that his nationalism was the consequence of his first individualism. He would not refuse us the right to stress what remains of this individualism in his traditionalism. Like M. Taine's plane-tree, "he was his own law and he made it bloom." He sought "a method that each may create himself." He defined Napoleon as "a method in the service of a passion." The professor of energy continued the task of the "intercessors." André Gide has delicately indicated that the word "*déraciné*" has never had the meaning Barrès lent it and that his book can be summed up thus: "Uprooting compelling Racadot to be original"—reproaches which hit the logician but hardly touch the writer whose real aim doubtless was to awaken in his soul "those incomparable exaltations which become, after thirty, the privilege of a few royal natures." Like his Sturel, he had a taste for harshness. He was "a force which desires to exhaust itself." His violence saw in woman less love than "a difficulty to overcome"; but his refinement was touched by "a life destined so quickly to come undone" and aspired to "be drunk with dis-

illusion." He transported this imaginative disposition into abstract thought, intoxicating himself with a "metaphysical emotion so voluptuously fantastic," proclaiming that "an intellectual, eager for all the savours of life, is the true hero." In the social struggle he satisfied, first and foremost, "the needs of his partisan soul," found love "insipid compared with the alcohol of a conspiracy," passed almost indifferently from excessive friendship to excessive hate and, if he devoted a big book to the memory of a somewhat paltry chief, may it not still be that, "the most subjective of men, he would interest in himself in favour of those rare persons only with whom he believed he had obscure relations"?

Let us take care however not to identify Barrès with François Sturel. In the trilogy where he reserved the possibility of exteriorizing himself in seven different characters, he has at least divided himself in two. Roemerspacher represents faithfully enough what Barrès might have become had he not borne within him Sturel's feverish soul, had he never looked at himself with other eyes—sometimes even those of Racadot despising that comrade who "needs Taine to appreciate the egotisms and the wastefulness of the social system." If Saint-Phlin is the pure Lorrain, Roemerspacher is the Lorrain sufficiently penetrated with Germanic culture to render Germany a conscientious homage and not to see in M. Asmu exclusively a pretext for caricature. It is Roemerspacher who, amid the frantic route of *Leurs Figures*, inspires Barrès with his powerful evocation of the Goethean Mothers. He reminds him of the existence in Bouteiller of a "reason, impersonal as it were, which nobly distinguishes him" from Sturel and Suret-Lefort. Incapable of the eloquent meditation upon the motif *Pax aut Bellum* in *La Grande Pitié des églises de France*, he has nevertheless rendered it possible by his disciplined effort. With everything symbolized by Sturel are on the contrary connected Barrès' impertinent pirouettes—for example the epigram on Boulanger: "A general whose French character was so beloved by the people they would have wished him Spanish"; the perfidious notice in the *Scènes et Doctrines de nationalisme* showing Le Play, Taine and certain of their disciples "more or less disgusted with their country," or this disconcertingly loyal confession: "Had I thought the world as I have thought Lorraine, I should really be a citizen of humanity." It is easy to understand that the publication, as an appendix to several of Barrès' works, of those certificates of good conduct constituted by Bourget's letters, has not been totally useless in reassuring simple souls.

To the nervous instability of the doctrinaire corresponds an

inequality of artistic execution. Barrès' novels contain a desultory element not denied by his most fervent admirers. The theoretical expositions, the explanatory commentaries and the cantilenas perpetually interrupt the narration of the events. Now and then he deliberately refuses to compose. He gives his notes on the seven Lorrains or on the biography of Portalis. He transcribes the sentiments of Bouteiller and of Sturel in two parallel columns. The story of Astiné Aravian is disappointingly commonplace. It is but too evident that Barrès is interested only in the lyric exaltation aroused in Sturel by magic syllables. We find here once more the evidence that things are of value in his eyes only as stimulants to his imagination. His invention is weak. He must touch beings, "handle" them, he would say, to describe them well. His art always has something of the grapple about it, whether he is following Bouteiller among his pupils upon whom he lavishes such different farewell counsels, bathing the figure of Waldeck-Rousseau with dry irony, spying on Briand at the tribune or on Caillaux before the Commission of Inquiry, painting in Taine "the animal" inhabited by philosophic thought, tracking the agony of Baron de Reinach, offering history a breathless picture of the grandiose parliamentary *corrida* of 1892. There are touches of Michelet and of Saint-Simon in the frescoes of *Leurs Figures*. Stendhal and Balzac are not absent from the magnificent, exalted chapters describing the pilgrimage to the Emperor's tomb and Hugo's funeral in *Les Déracinés*. Whoever wants to know the somewhat affected simplicity of Barrès should read *Colette Baudoche* in which a delicate young girl of Metz is cleverly raised to the rank of the heroines: "Little girl of my country, I have not even said you were beautiful; and yet, if I have been true, direct, some, I believe, will love you no less than those immortalized by an amorous adventure." The amateur of strong constructions will find satisfaction in *La Colline inspirée*, Barrès' most classically perfect work, with its story nobly ordered between two grave meditations; but whoever wishes to attain what ultimately differentiates this art from any other, should turn to "the mysterious evening at Billancourt" where the drama is charged with ideas and with that cruel voluptuousness which is perhaps Barrès' strongest sentiment.

Certain writers have celebrated life, others death. His special domain is the agony of that mystic life, intellectual or sensual, which gives of it the prolonged spectacle. This taste, so manifest in *Du Sang, de la Volupté et de la Mort*, he has expressed again in *Amori et Dolori sacrum*, *Le Voyage de Sparte* and *Le Greco*, books a little aside from his work, in which he did not pretend that all his ordinary read-

ers should follow him. *Amori de Dolori sacrum* "belongs," he says, "to the same vein as *Du Sang*. . . The latter, in any event, seems to me heavier in the hand and more learned for the ear than my 1895 volume." . . . In it he tells again the death of Venice, "the song of a beauty going to meet death"; for "this extended agony is the strongest charm of Venice to seduce me." In decribing that city haunted by so many romantic phantoms, his object is not "to paint stones, water, clouds directly, but to render intelligible the indefinable states which the malaria of this romantic ruin induces in us." His ambition is to touch "some extreme points of sensibility." He pretends to offer "*the happy few*" "a Venice on fire" and doubtless was never more sincere than at this moment of his highest virtuosity. For he does not give way: "I am not unaware of the romanticism which such an emotional state supposes; but precisely we wish to regulate it." It is significant that *Amori et Dolori sacrum* should end on "November 2 in Lorraine" where he declares he prefers to "the famous desolations" sung by him, the modest Lorraine cemetery where "my profound consciousness lies outspread before me."

The same frankness is the strength of *Le Voyage de Sparte*. He landed in Greece without shedding his individualism. The punishment was inevitable: "Wherever I am, I am ill at ease if I have not a point of view whence the details subordinate themselves to each other and whence the ensemble harmonizes with my former acquisitions." He is disappointed by the "hard perfection" of the Acropolis. He succeeds in understanding the art of Phidias only by analysing intellectually the "*νοῦς*" of Anaxagoras. He admits loyally: "If Goethe had not prepared me by his commentary on Spinoza, I should have nothing living in me with which to connect the thought of Phidias: a Jew and a German are my intermediate links." For a moment he becomes enthusiastic over "the burning bush in the midst of the gardens of Sparta." The divorce is none the less patent however. Greece holds his reason alone. She sends him back to his Lorraine, laying bare the intimate secret of his creative art: "Even after the classical lesson, I shall continue to produce a romantic art contracting and rending the heart." His old love of Toledo and "the close kinship between the work of a Tintoretto and the work of a Greco" suggest to him a book on this strangely mystical painting. The year following appeared *La Colline inspirée* which is, in a Lorraine setting, on his acropolis, Sion-Vaudémont, the history of one of those "famous desolations" so dear to him. Perhaps, while writing it, he experienced a pacifying harmony and the illusion of resurrecting in himself that regretted past "where men had romantic souls with a classic discipline."

The war came. To realize his dream as patriot and poet, it should have been short and brilliant. It was long and patient. Amid that frightful carnage the voluptuous cruelties of the partisan would have seemed sacrilegious. This is perceived in comparing *En regardant le fond des crevasses* with *Leurs Figures* or *Dans le cloaque*. Barrès wished to serve effectively. He devoted himself exclusively to propaganda and journalism. The numerous volumes of *L'Ame française pendant la guerre* bear witness to this activity; but the romantic voices were not dead in this soul and, in 1922, he gave us *Un Jardin sur l'Oronte*, a "story of gold, of silver and of azure," with his voluptuous "orchestration of complaint, of tears and of extravagance," with the old nostalgic appeal: "To what genius are addressed the disquietudes stirred in our conscience by a setting so poor and so strong? What is it I love in Syria and what is it I wish to find there?" What this new *Tristan et Iseut* wishes to find in Syria with streaming wheels is all the poetry sketched in the story of Astiné. Oriante is a true daughter of Barrès. Her secret is simply "the courageous will to live in accepting the conditions of life." Oriante (whose "friendship remained firm beneath the mobile wave, but she welcomed all the sea,") proposes to us, once more, that high ideal of art and of life—to keep one's reason lucid amid the most exalted passion—whereby Barrès, great writer, will remain in addition an "intercessor" for all those who, seeking a discipline, will deserve to create it themselves, following his example.

In *Amori et Dolori* Barrès congratulates Charles Maurras on having already, in 1890, written these lines: "The whole world would be less good if it involved a smaller number of mysterious victims sacrificed to its perfection. Victim or not, each of us, when he is wise and sees that nothing is, if it is not in the common order, renders thanks for the form in which his fate is clad, whatever it may be. He pities alone the turbulent fools whose formless destiny drags them away to the infinite flux." In 1894, the preface to *Le Chemin de Paradis* permitted Maurras to specify the evil from which his epoch suffered: "It is never questions to-day of anything but Sentiments. Women, so harassed and humiliated by our customs, have avenged themselves by communicating their nature to us. Everything has become effeminate, from the mind to love." Here we already have the Maurras of *Le Romantisme féminin*, an "allegory of disordered sentiment" in the form of a critical study on four "gentle woman-headed monsters"—the Maurras who, judging Sand and Musset in *Les Amants de Venise*, declares that "to love well, one must not love love. It is even impor-

tant to feel some hatred for it." With the romantic disorder this youthful Maurras already associated philosophic disorder: "I have a special horror for the last Germans. The Infinite! as they say. The sentiment of the Infinite! These absurd sounds and these shameful forms should be enough in themselves to lead to the re-establishment of the beautiful idea of the Finite." Let us recognize here the voice which was to formulate, in *L'Action française et la Religion catholique*, this sharp distinction: "In æsthetics, in politics, I have known the joy of seizing, in their high evidence, some matrix-ideas. In pure philosophy, no." In brutal contradiction with "the insensate desire to elevate all human life to the paroxysm," he wrote the nine stories of *Le Chemin:* "I have dared evoke, in the presence of a thousand errors, the finished types of Reason, of Beauty and of Death, triple and unique end of the world." These tales, in a hammered prose, recall Maurras' brief sojourn, between France and Barrès, at the crossing of two very dissimilar arts. When he revised them twenty-five years after their publication, he did not deem them contrary to his general teaching. It is true he suppressed *La Bonne Mort* and rendered *Les deux Testaments de Simplice* unintelligible; but he did not alter that pagan and aristocratic conception of human life which inspired them all and justified the poem inscribed by Anatole France on the pediment of this temple. The happiest expression of Maurras' deep-seated paganism is the fable of Crito's *Serviteurs* who, in the Elysian Fields, refuse to return to a barbarous Athens where absurdity reigns as master, where the Hebrew Christ has triumphed over the Hellenic hierarchy.

Anthinea shows at what sources Maurras renewed his strength. He set out for Athens as for "a lovers' tryst." He experienced no disappointment, nothing but confirmation and exaltation of his reasons for living and thinking. Athens strengthened his hatred of democracy and of vagrant romanticism. She revealed to him "the great secret which is nothing but being natural while becoming perfect." At the same time she refined his sense of dialectics and purged his mind of the cloudy theories on progress by confirming there the idea of a "point of perfection." The Acropolis fired him with a "lyric madness" which he has described in eloquent pages. The masterpieces filled him with "a living and fertile admiration": "This young goddess, the headless, wingless Victory who flies rather than runs even as she fastens her sandal, bears on the waves of her spreading robe the greatest lessons of style, that is to say of measure and of enthusiasm." *Athènes antique* which joins to the Greek part of *Anthinea* the chapter on Hymettus taken from *Quand les Français ne s'aimaient pas* and the invocation to Minerva ("What do we ask of thee? Measure of the soul, O cadence of the

Universe!") remains, from a strictly literary point of view, Charles Maurras' most harmonious work.

Must it be regretted, since this happy balance between meditation and action could not last, that Maurras did not become a Mistral of French prose, dreaming of Greek beauty in the landscape of *L'Etang de Berre*, "on a hillside crowned with a mill which has ceased to grind"? *L'Etang de Marthe et les Hauteurs d'Aristarchè* answers us. In Maurras' country, in 1801, some fishermen found a marble tablet recalling the memory of Aristarchè, a noble lady of Ephesus (an Athenian Colony, the writer reminds us). She landed in Gaul, obeying a dream, with the navigators from Phocœa (another Athenian colony), bringing the statue of her goddess Diana with her; but Martigue derives its name from the Syrian Martha, an actress and a witch. This protégée of Marius' personifies all the dissolvent Asiatic influences saved by Rome, to her shame, at the same time as, to her honour, she preserved pure Hellenism. This opposition directs Maurras' thought. It is not far, at times, from suggesting to him a vision of the world as antithetical as Hugo's. For, as he has said, "the philosophic and æsthetic theories of *Anthinea* form the very basis of my politics"; and, for twenty-five years, the watchword of his life has been "Politics first!" From the conflict between Martha and Aristarchè he has concluded that "no origin is beautiful. True beauty is at the end of things"—a theoretic principle whence flows immediately this practical consequence: one must not remain "reduced to the poor centre of one's individuality." In the introduction to the new edition of *Le Chemin* (1920), Maurras has said how inevitable this duty had appeared to him: "Our grandparents had taken a profound pleasure in destroying. The sweetness and the majesty of the lost past were more or less felt by our fathers. Reconstruction appeared to interest our elders. The conservative truth took shape more distinctly in our eyes. We had to serve it in fact if we did not wish to ruin our life."

He will then reply to the regrets of the artist that he has not ruined his life. He has sharply denounced every force of disorder in contemporary society: Romanticism in the manner of Chateaubriand who "incarnates above all the genius of revolutions"; the Jew "become a revolutionary agent"; the protestant heir of Rousseau and Kant; the Jacobin individualist against whom must be turned the *Contr'Un* of the sixteenth century in order to oppose the declaration of the rights of man with the declaration of the duties of man in society; finally democracy which, whether conservative or anarchistic republic, is equally incapable of continuity in the foreign

policy demanded by the author of *Kiel et Tanger*. Over against these "clouds," he has reared anew the essential truths; and first of all, "the greatest of natural realities, the goddess France." Love of his country, his desire to assure her discipline and stability, has led him to "integral nationalism," that is to say royalism. His eloquent daily preaching has rallied round him young and enthusiastic devotees, sensitive above all perhaps to this "delight in doing something difficult but great" to which *L'Enquête sur la monarchie* invited them. Had not the intellectual passion for order led their chief to pardon the Oriental errors of ancient Rome because of Hellenism saved by her; to forget the Jewish Old Testament kept by modern Rome among her sacred books; no longer to see in her anything but the guardian of a religious tradition marvellously compatible with the idea of a well-ordered State; to make finally this profession of faith, at once paradoxical and profoundly true: "I am a Roman by virtue of all that is positive in my being"?

In choosing to become a dialectician instead of the story-teller and the critic he seemed to promise, Maurras did not, however, forsake his dear Athens. Thibaudet has subtly indicated the parallelism between his *Enquête* and a certain discourse of Nicocles in Isocrates. Maurras would doubtless prefer to have the Socrates of the dialogues evoked in his connection; but his adversaries will object that he lacks the supreme ease of his predecessors in maieutics, that he undertakes to study Dante with the too evident intention of discovering in him "a useful lesson of anti-romantic truth," that *L'Avenir de l'intelligence*, a summary of the diverse conditions of the man of letters for three centuries, proclaims too visibly its aim to persuade the champions of intelligence that "all hopes float on the ship of a counter-revolution." We think of Daniel Halévy's judgment: "Maurras is a Mediterranean man, a tragic. His mind conceives distinct forms terminated by death." The number and the necessity of the appendices in each of his books testify to the difficulty of incorporating certain heterogeneous elements in his spontaneous thought. "An orthodox Comtist and an honorary Catholic," according to Thibaudet's pretty definition, he has well described his personal attitude in the portrait of Charles Jundzill: "Not only did his mind not miss God, but his mind felt, if it may be thus expressed, a rigorous need *to miss God*." Reasons of statesmanship decided him to seek again alliance with the Catholicism which, honestly though subtly, he denies having attacked in *Les Serviteurs*. He objects only "to the inner Christ of the folks of the Reformation," and he adds: "I shall not leave this learned procession of the Councils, of the Popes and of all the great

men of the modern élite, to trust to the Gospels of four obscure Jews." This argument of an outside apologist has not convinced all Catholics. Many of them here think less of Socrates than of one of those Sophists of whom Socrates was the rival and, from a certain point of view, the disloyal competitor.

Maurras has been accused of coldness. He has protested vehemently: "Let us leave these poor, inevitable cavillers to imagine we dream of a universal and barbarous reign of Logic." He means to temper his logic "with judgment" and "with the trained sentiment of beauty, of order and of the poetry of the laws, of their humanity, of their ineffable charity." According to him, in the *Divine Comedy* "sensibility, saved from itself and conducted into order, became a principle of perfection." He loves to bend over concrete reality, to the extent of interrupting an article on Bolshevism to congratulate Loriot upon his pretty name, so thoroughly French—of adding, for the needs of his polemics, some surnames without amenity to those Léon Daudet furnishes him inexhaustibly. However he reveals to us, in the preface to *Le Chemin*, an extraordinary logician's distinction, a chain forged by himself of which he long remained prisoner, between the prose which to him "appeared naturally charged with designing the material aspect of the world as much as with defining the divine ideas" and the verse to which alone "belonged the privilege of expressing pain or anguish, the secrets of sentiment." Barrès cured him of this error; and if there were occasion to make a similar division of his work, we should be inclined to think there is much less emotion in the rhymed *Inscriptions* of this friend of Moréas than in certain pages of his prose. It is false that Maurras is cold. It is true he is passionate—for example this stanza from *Destinée:*

Et tu sens dans la flamme torse
De tous tes vœux les plus distincts
Lutter le Soir et le Matin
Et le rêve étreindre la force.

This passion, however, bears upon intellectual objects only. By which we do not mean to depreciate the man who has adorned conservatism with a virile poetry. For "to maintain is to create. It is also to preserve for future creations the starting-point and the foundation worthy of them." He has been able, by evoking these ideas, to equal the masculine formulas he admires in Auguste Comte and Pierre Corneille: "The good he wishes is that of the intelligence, and then the good of the commonwealth." He has, in speaking of his intellectual

guides, tender delicacies: "If Dante is not the king of poets, as must be agreed, heartbrokenly . . ." What a mixture of lucidity and regret in this confession! To render full justice to Maurras the poet, one must, on leaving Lucretius, reread the essay in which is expressed his gratitude towards his master, Comte, who flattered himself on having rendered man "more regular than heaven," towards the "saint" who unveiled to his disciples "the fair visage of Unity, smiling in a heaven which does not seem too far away."

Shall we, in conclusion, fall back upon the antithesis of Péguy who, in accordance with his favourite ideas, saw two aspects to Royalism, "the mystical being naturally that of the *Action Française* in rationalistic forms which have never deceived anyone but themselves"? We hear the reply of Maurras who can smile on occasion. He has drawn a picture of Dante certain traits of which apply very precisely to himself. He presents him as "eminently reasonable and sensitive to the finest measures of taste" but ready also to refute "with knife-blows, *col coltello* . . . the adversary who lets himself fall below a certain level of intelligence and honour." At the same time he extols "his voluptuous spirit, accessible to every pleasure." The intellectual voluptuousness of the determined logician, Charles Maurras, was ever his theory of good fortune. It comes to him from Greece, like everything he really cherishes, and is already expressed in Androcles' greeting to Criton: "But, O dear Master, the face of Fortune smiles in thy coming." He has applied it to Ulysses to prove it truer through having two faces: "The wisest and most patient of men know it was fitting not to be too unhappy. It is a kind of duty. He who feels himself betrayed by the gods and rejected by Fortune has but to disappear from the world to which he no longer adapts himself. Ulysses, it is true, persisted, and the hero superior to circumstances, through wisdom, reared his triumph upon the enmity of nature." *L'Avenir de l'Intelligence* and *Mademoiselle Monk* draw the practical lesson from this wisdom: "The man of action is but a workman whose art consists in taking advantage of the lucky chances. . . All politics come back to this art of lying in wait for the *combinazione*, the happy chance. . . All despair in politics is an absolute stupidity." In modern terms the example of Ulysses interprets itself thus: "A moment always comes when the problem of success is a question of insight and reduces itself to the search for what our Ancients called *junctura rerum*, the joint where the bony structure bends, though it is rigid elsewhere, the place where the spring of the action will play." In daily politics as well as in hours of intoxication before the Propylæa, Charles Maurras has proclaimed that the supreme beauty of the

world was "the unifying power of man's clear reason crowned with the tenderest smiles of Fortune."

2. REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT AND INTERNATIONALISM

The internal discords of the end of the century divided our literature into writers of the right and writers of the left. Zola's famous letter and the protest of the intellectuals are the exact counterpart of the political action of Coppée or Lemaître; and when the historian wishes to judge that period, two opposed monuments will offer themselves to his attention: Maurice Barrès' *Déracinés* (completed by *Scènes et Doctrines du nationalisme*) and Anatole France's *Histoire contemporaine.*

It is enough to write this title for the multiple characters with whom France has peopled *L'Orme du mail, Le Mannequin d'osier, L'Anneau d'améthyste* and *M. Bergeret à Paris* to pass at once in charmed memory. All the life of a big provincial town is there depicted with its extensions into the surrounding country and its ramifications as far as Paris—a convenient setting and one which the great writer's satire enlarges at will. France is not unaware that the irreducible enemy of free thought is the Church. Indefatigably, mercilessly, he describes, in the diocese administered by the cautious Mgr. Charlot, in the midst of a swarm of ecclesiastics each of whom offers the ironist a hold through some human weakness, the struggle between two representative priests: M. Lantaigne, the apostle of unity, uncompromising with regard to the world and M. Guitrel, opportunist and arrivist, who, under the wiles of a second-hand clothes-dealer, keeps the same hatred for democratic institutions and will prove it as soon as he has nothing more to expect of the Republic. Beside these strong, dangerous men the Conservative party seems composed of puppets. The De Brécés represent the upper aristocracy, unintelligent, monarchist by tradition, anti-Semitic and anti-Dreyfusist by order, completely bewildered when a reality like the victory of the Americans over the Spaniards comes to upset its antediluvian prejudices. They have friends in the army such as that "honest, simple old man" General Cartier de Chalmot, and they group about them the discontented members of the Bench like M. Lerond, an ex-deputy attorney-general. In the capitalistic society of Valcombe, in the home of the iron-master, Dellion, these nobles are aped. His title assures acceptance for the old Chouan Gromance, abundantly betrayed by a wife whose agreeable body houses a voluptuous, practical soul. The prudent politicians are received there—M. de Terremondre who always knows how to hold his tongue and Doctor Fornerol, "State Catholic." The archivist

Mazure is feared because his investigations have revealed to him the shameful secrets dissimulated by their names and their fortunes. The vital preoccupation of these cliques was to defend their salons; and then suddenly the events overwhelm them. Baroness de Bonmont, a converted Jewess, forces her way into the best society by offering a ciborium to Notre-Dame-des-Belles-Feuilles. Thus she serves the ambitions of her son, a blasé lobbyist. She brings her money to the good cause which gives her in exchange two lovers, the swindler Raoul Marcien, a paladin of nationalism and Joseph Lacrisse, a municipal councillor of Paris, one of the leaders of the Trublions, a league in which a handful of unscrupulous arrivists, together with a few unfathomable Jewish bankers, have collected a crowd of factionaries, idiots, restless spirits and sharpers for the purpose of strangling "*la Gueuse*" and re-establishing the King.

What is the attitude of the governing class towards the disorders of this pretended party of order? France who had taken his reader to the Nuncio, Mgr. Cima, a worthy example of that Roman duplicity of which no one knows whether it is profound diplomacy or absolute insignificance, also takes him to see Loyer, Premier without illusions, and the representative of the Republic in the Department, the Prefect Worms-Clavelin, a Jewish opportunist who keeps his position thanks to the intrigues of his wife, *née* Noémi Coblentz, and whose daughter is brought up by the Dames du Précieux Sang—thanks also to his clumsy good nature. Those elected by the people, deputies and senators, have as their sole object the avoidance of scandals and prosecutions which the Pannetons of all kinds could exploit against them. Under these nonchalant masters life continues its course and until the first mention of the Affair, at the beginning of *L'Anneau d'améthyste*, no manifestation disturbs the city's calm. Only, from time to time, a crime followed by capital punishment, or a conjugal misfortune or the visions of a clairvoyant come to afford new matter for the conversation in M. Paillot's book-shop.

It is in this setting that Anatole France has placed the character of M. Bergeret and he has brought to his delineation the same delicate art which renders the figure of Jérôme Coignard unforgettable. A professor at the Faculté des Lettres, a distinguished humanist, a keen observer, M. Bergeret sees all his merit buried in the sombre vault where but two or three faithful disciples accompany him. Unhappy in his private life, reduced to playing an obscure part in public life, he is, in *L'Orme du mail* and *Le Mannequin d'osier*, the spokesman of a disenchanted philosophy. He excels in the analyses which disconcert his auditors: "One never knows whether you are joking or in ear-

nest," his wife says to him. "I am not a dilettante like you," M. Mazure flings at him. Poor dilettante, clever most of all at wounding himself, at discouraging his own effort, "he was so unhappy as to be intelligent enough to recognize his mediocrity." He maintained that the true science of life is a "benevolent contempt for men," and instinctively, "he forgave much to misanthropy." For he believed that civilization merely went barbarism one better in cruelty. In politics, he preferred the Republic as a lesser evil: "It is not justice, but it is facility." He refused to go beyond this disillusionized pessimism. Yet M. Bergeret's soul was not base and the lessons of life were to save him. Betrayed by his wife, after the ninety minutes needed by him to reach a state of relative wisdom, he still found occasion to despair: "I believe that organic life is an evil peculiar to this ugly little planet." He did not work any the less on that account to free himself. From the first chapters of *L'Anneau*, his splenetic spirit has given way to delightful reflections tinged with a human melancholy, whether inspired by the memory of Hercules or by a poor little dog which came to him. In the crisis of conscience caused by the Affair he does not hesitate and takes the side of revision. It is true he defends the truth without illusion as to its triumph; but France decided that M. Bergeret should come to Paris to taste anew the charm of the beloved town, to deplore the sacrilegious changes in it and also to affirm a new faith in the city of the future. Doubtless, in the neighbourhood of his sister Zoé, he exaggerates his speculative spirit. He preaches a little at times. Who would dare complain of it when he celebrates in noble accents the omnipotence of thought?—"Nothing is more powerful than speech. The concatenation of strong arguments and of lofty thoughts is a bond that nothing can break. Speech, like David's sling, discomfits the violent and casts down the strong. Without it the world would belong to armed brutes. Who then holds them in respect? Alone, weaponless and naked, thought."

M. Bergeret's evolution corresponds to the progress of Anatole France's thought. When he accused him of being "less convinced of Dreyfus' innocence than of the general culpability," Barrès closed his eyes to this change. Certainly there was, in the first France, a spirit of spontaneous, almost instinctive anarchy. He delighted in stressing the promiscuous incidents which suddenly upset the social order, whether it were a matter of hostile soldiers fraternizing or of the archbishop getting his game from a poacher. He showed M. Bergeret more in revolt than Pied d'Alouette and dismissed, non-suited, both radicals and conservatives "faithful to the same traditions and subject to the same prejudices." Above all he was alive to the "immense irony of

things." He kept none the less a few very strong beliefs. He hated war with all his might and did not disown M. Roux's words: "I believe the fraternity of nations will be the work of triumphant socialism." Unlike Barrès and Maurras, he did not regard the Affair as having a narrowly French significance. He referred it to international conscience and gladly welcomed Commander Aspertini's opinion. Though laughing at his errors, he kept for Pecus "a deep and sorrowful sympathy."

This twofold aspect of his thought gives an extraordinary attraction to *L'Histoire contemporaine*. That picture of a society, of which we have been able to trace but the broad lines, is executed with the painstaking spirit of a sportive portrait-painter. A gallery of France's figures would require the mention of all, including the slightest silhouettes. He excels in representing them in repose; but he can show them equally well in action. Let the reader recall the chapters of *L'Anneau* where the soldier Bonmont studies equality and inequality in the barracks, where Madame Worms-Clavelin, having given herself in a cab to a young statesman, comes to call on her daughter and ends the afternoon with a kind thought for her husband. He brings out easily, with a stroke, the contradictory character of these puppets: "M. Mazure, who was a free-thinker, was seized, at the idea of death, with a strong desire to possess an immortal soul. . . . " "M. de Terremondre was too moderate to secede from the party of violence." He triumphs in the psychological *déblayage:* "He searched his mind for the name of a strong man; but whether he did not know one among his friends, whether his unfaithful memory refused him the name he wanted, or a natural malevolence made him reject the examples which came to his mind, he did not finish his sentence." To the same art belong the little sentences, at the end of chapters, which delicately stress the concordance between the theoretical opinions of the heroes and their private troubles. It is the composition which reveals the sole weakness of this history, its subordination to the current events which *M. Bergeret à Paris* follows a little too closely. Polemics sometimes lead France to spin out, as in the story of the Lacrisse election, or to indulge in strained comparisons such as the two attitudes of Guitrel before and after his appointment to Tourcoing; but do we not also owe to these quarrelsome exigencies the amusing fiction of the Trublions who "burst because they were full of wind"? The abrupt passages from one class of society to another in this review of the follies of the day are always carefully calculated. Nothing is more skilful than the description of Guitrel at the theatre between two pictures of M. Bergeret; nothing more evocative of an at-

mosphere than the easy sentences with which each of France's chapters begins and those perpetual recurrences, throughout the work, of symbolic motifs. To a reader of *L'Histoire contemporaine*, "the niece of the great Pouilly of the dictionary," "that piece of furniture commonly called a puff," and "page 212 of Volume XXXVIII of the *Histoire des Voyages*," remain unforgettably dear.

Great as may be his talent for drawing types in the setting which suits them, France attains his greatest effects in the conversations. There his psychological subtlety, his picturesque erudition and his irony are harmoniously united. He directs with the same ease two parallel meditations in the depths of two arm-chairs or the talk at a table where ten guests interweave comically the most varied themes. The dialogues between Lantaigne and Bergeret, between Worms-Clavelin and Guitrel form excellent comedy scenes. The discussions at the bookseller Paillot's equal the conversations of Jérôme Coignard and Jacques Tournebroche. Doubtless they abound in *gauloiseries;* but, as Aspertini says: "Life would really be too sad if the rosy swarm of wanton thoughts did not come at times to console the old age of honest folk." Let us listen to Maurras: "The plastic tradition," he says, "animates the whole of France's work." Must we reproach him because Mme. de Gromance, the image of this plastic tradition, so often haunted M. Bergeret's thoughts? These are diversions. Carlo Aspertini has proved capable of an eloquent homage to the French nation, "friend of the human race, fellow-citizen of all peoples." M. Bergeret's bitterness melted into tender emotion when he had to bid farewell to the town where he had suffered, and when he saw once more his childhood's apartment. Anatole France has shown that he possessed, in addition to his terrible irony, the tragic strength which describes the seminarist Piédnagel's expulsion by Lantaigne, the indulgence which repeats, apropos of Riquet, this truth in *Le Lys rouge*, that "souls are mutually impenetrable" and the generous virile faith which thus sums up his masterly fresco of a civil war: "The Affair has revealed the evil with which our fine society is stricken, just as Koch's vaccine accentuates the tubercular lesions in an organism. Fortunately there are deep human floods beneath this silvery foam; but when will my country be delivered from ignorance and hatred?"

The partisan had been awakened in him. To his desire to charm he henceforth added the passion for serving. Having, like Voltaire, become one of the masters of opinion in France and in Europe, he openly pursued his crusade against "ignorance and hatred." His power of convincing was all the greater because the orator of *Vers*

les temps meilleurs who prolonged the dialogue of Renan and Pallas Athene, was also the satirist of *Crainquebille*, skilful at sharply stressing social injustices in tales of nonchalant irony. This historian who applied the principles of scientific criticism to the story of Jeanne d'Arc published, the same year, *L'Ile des Pingouins* where, in a comic epitome worthy of Swift, the life of a nation is depicted from its mythical period to the days of a very contemporary timeliness. *Sur la pierre blanche* unites the two inspirations which share his mind. A long conversation, in a Roman springtime, between cultivated friends who speak philosophically of the past and of the future is interrupted by two readings. In *Gallion*, Nicole Langelier describes the encounter of the proconsul and the apostle Paul, framed with dialogues which evoke the atmosphere of *Thaïs*. In *Par la porte de corne ou par la porte d'ivoire*, Hippolyte Dufresne lets his revery wander over future society. Through the mouth of this Nicole Langelier, whose name is dear to the humanist, France expresses his faith: "Universal peace will one day be realized, not because men will become better (this it is not permitted to hope), but because a new order of things, a new science, new economic necessities will impose upon them the state of peace, as formerly the very conditions of their existence placed them and maintained them in the state of war." There was no illuminism in his adhesion of pacifist socialism.

Never, moreover, did he become the slave of any party and *La Révolte des Anges* is yet another proof of the independence of his fantasy. It had already been seen in *Les Dieux ont soif* where his double talent as historian and novelist is reconciled. This book, which offers perhaps the most complete epitome of his artistic genius, takes as starting-point the idea frequently expressed throughout his work, even in the "anticipation" of *Sur la pierre blanche*, that the men who have presided over the greatest events were mediocre men. Thus he shows us Marat and Robespierre as they really were, stripped of their contradictory legends. What they lose in false majesty they easily gain in human interest. The better to demonstrate the psychology of the Terrorists he invents one. Evariste Gamelin, a second-rate painter, a sensitive soul intoxicated with optimistic philosophy, becomes little by little one of the fiercest Jacobins, sacrificing even his oldest friends "so that to-morrow all French people may embrace each other joyfully." About this character of whom the slightest clumsiness would have made a fool or a monster and who remains, even in his tragic madness, a man, France has painted contemporary society and life such as he loves it at that end of the pleasure-living, artistic eighteenth century. For though the sinister shadows of the Friend of

the People and the Incorruptible may pass and bow down for an instant the head menaced by the guillotine, Elodie, Julie, the Thévenin, Mme. Rochemaure pursue none the less their amorous and mercenary intrigues; Jean Blaise and Desmahis run only the faster to the gratification of their desires; the Reverend Father Longuemare continues his devotions and nothing disturbs the epicurean wisdom of Maurice Brotteaux des Ilettes. In this latter hero, a retired tax-collector ruined by the Revolution, France has given us a brother to Jérôme Coignard —a brother whose scepticism is soberer and more delicately adorned and whose ironical acumen does not exclude a generous dignity; and Brotteaux remains steadfastly faithful, to the very *Sic ubi non erimus* . . . of the scaffold, to nature's poet who had explained "the dream of life." The master writer Anatole France has unfolded many a picture of this dream, from the smiling comedies in which Sylvestre Bonnard amused himself to the bloody drama of which Brotteaux des Ilettes is the witness. While others found glory in the exaltation of passions as powerfully excited by ideas and words as by confused desires, he has reserved his cruel barbed attacks for every fanaticism; and, obedient to the two goddesses, Irony and Pity, he formerly invoked, his supreme ambition has been, throughout a long production already classic, to raise in troubled times the persuasive voice of Tolerance.

Perhaps Jean Jaurès's fame as a tribune risks wronging the literary reputation he deserves. The first image evoked by his name is that of an orator hurling virulent apostrophes at the heads of his opponents ("It is we who are the true heirs of the ancestral hearth. We have taken its flame while you have kept but the cinders . . .") or orchestrating the great themes of modern sensibility, from the "old song which cradled human misery" to the true patriotism which he defines as "the equal right of every country to liberty and justice, the duty of every citizen to foster in his country the forces of liberty and of justice"; and this picture is not inexact in this sense that his written prose keeps, even in its most finished passages, such as the perfect page where he celebrates our communion with the earth, the same oratorical rhythm. Journalist, historian or philosopher, Jaurés remains, as on the platform, an admirable creator of images whether he describes that end of July, 1914, when "each people appears in the streets of Europe, its little torch in hand, and now behold the conflagration," or whether he prophesies the revolt and the time "when peoples will say to those responsible: 'Go and God forgive you!'" or whether, as a psychologist, he brands triumphant egotism: "They do

not see far, whatever their appetite, who reduce the whole horizon to a prey."

It would be impossible however to admit the reducing of Jaurès to this verbal force and felicity which are but two traits of a generous, complex nature. It was not an accidental eloquence which, in 1905, inspired him with this picture: "The present world is ambiguous and confused. There is in it no fatality, no certainty. The proletariat is neither strong enough for there to be assurance of peace, nor is it feeble enough for there to be fatality of war." That Jaurès' enthusiasm was ever ready to be awakened, there is no better proof than his intervention in the Affair into which he threw himself in spite of the abstention advised by several socialist leaders determined to see in it merely a bourgeois drama: "Dreyfus," replied Jaurès, "is neither an officer nor a bourgeois. He is stripped, by the very excess of misfortune, of every class characteristic. . . . We are not obliged to take refuge outside humanity in order to remain socialists." Some of his adversaries, treating him as a crafty peasant, have at least paid homage to that good sense which denounced Hervé's sophism: "To rebel against the despotism of kings, against the tyranny of the employer and of capital, and to assume passively the yoke of conquest, the domination of foreign militarism—this would be so puerile and miserable a contradiction that it would be swept away at the first alarm by every aroused force of instinct and of reason." Many examples bear witness to Jaurès' perspicacity—the delicate portrait of Lemaître as a "repentant coquette," epigrammatic judgments upon Hervé who possesses "the genius of misunderstanding" or upon Taine "who thought he knew many facts because he had taken many notes," the vigorous denunciation at the Amsterdam Congress of the parliamentary powerlessness of Social Democracy. He opposed the fanaticism of friend and foe alike with liberation through the reason: "The Church has so skilfully fashioned the yoke which weighs upon the nations, she has so multiplied her holds upon mind and on life, that many men may perhaps need to resort to outrage in order to convince themselves they are freed. I prefer, for us all, other ways of liberation."

He did not owe his own liberty to the "weak, convulsive revolt" interpreted in a vulgar couplet of the *Carmagnole* disapproved by Jaurès no less than by Bourget. His strength had two pillars: philosophy and history. The studies in *La Réalité du monde sensible* had led him to these conclusions that "the real is that which is intelligible" and that "there is no action without reaction," that is to say to the idea of unity and of universal penetration, the modern form of pantheism. From the same premises some drew a lesson of passive doubt. Jaurès'

affirmative and incisively plebeian tendency shows itself in his irony for these dilettantes: "They make up for research by anxiety, which is easier and more distinguished." As for himself, he proclaimed the necessity of an effort, of a faith in effort demanded of us by this universe all parts of which are interdependent. In the domain of history he found this law: "Social evolution forms a continuous whole." He undertook then to "suppress nothing which constitutes human life" and, by reviving the revolutionary epic, to "reconcile Plutarch, Michelet and Karl Marx." Thence, in his *Histoire de la Révolution*, over and above the documentary merits which have not appeared negligible to a specialist like M. Aulard, a prodigious narrative animation. Thence the penetrating reflections, that judgment upon the Girondins for example: "One would say that the heart of the Gironde does not exactly coincide with the heart of France." Thence those magnificent portraits of Robespierre and Danton whom Jaurès drew as a shrewd politician and a poet.

His vast philosophical and historical culture tinged his socialistic doctrine with humanity. His brilliant personality attracted to socialistic ideas sympathies which a touch of dogma would have discouraged. Developing the notions expressed in *La Réalité*, Rappoport rightly says that Jaurès' political idea was a "kind of cosmic democracy." He aimed at "the continuous harmony of mechanical progress and of human progress" which would allow the proletarian "to cease to be a machine in order to become a liberty." Upon this Bergsonian distinction the professor of philosophy who never abdicated in Jaurès (*Tu es sacerdos in æternum*) constructs his idealism: "When we flash on a blind and brutal world this possibility, this reality of liberty and of harmony, we ourselves cast, in reality, the basis of an idealistic interpretation of the world." We must not, he added, be "forever judging, judging all the time." We must, in order to prepare the future, understand the past and the present. Then it will be perceived that the social revolution can be accomplished peacefully thanks to "the plasticity, the elasticity of bourgeois power," that persuasion works at it more efficaciously than violence, the "absolute pessimism," "the desperate, fierce waiting" of the Guesdists. Then it will be recognized that "the fatherland is not an exhausted idea" and one will have a clearer conception of the originality of the French genius wherein mingle "the passionate appeal to human justice, the seriousness of the Hebraic conscience and the grace, the force, the reason of Greek thought." For this progress towards the truth, as he conceived it to be possible, Jaurès demanded however the end of that armed peace in which France played the rôle of hostage between England and Germany, the advent of a

truly pacific era. This explains why the struggle against war occupies so great a place in his work.

To this problem he devoted the sole book the demands of his daily activity allowed him to finish in the vast synthesis planned by him under the title of *L'Organisation sociale de la France. L'Armée nouvelle* itself suffers, in the form if not in the thought crystallized by years of discussion, from that obligation to write amid the tumult of polemics. At least it presents a vivid picture of so generous a spirit. In this work which was originally to have been called *La Défense nationale et la Paix internationale*, he combats the military conception of his age which, based upon a false idea of Revenge, puts the army at the disposal of a class, conceals from the soldier, under cover of rigorous automatism, the gravity of his task and makes an armed nation a snare; but his analysis is not a systematic attack. He respects Captain Gilbert whose principles he disputes; he lingers to contemplate "a fine drama of French thought and will" in the Alsatian campaign of 1774; he renders homage to the bourgeoise because it is "a working-class and declares the army "should not be lowered from the high intellectual level to which it had been raised by the immense effort of the human mind." The measures he advocates are dictated to him by a plan of intelligent defence, based upon Revolutionary experience. He dreams of "a civilization of free men" as splendid as the Greek society founded upon slavery, whose army, animated by a deliberate faith, will fight enthusiastically to kill war and conquer that international peace in which "the new humanity will be rich and vital only if each people's originality be prolonged in total harmony and if every country vibrates to the human lyre." Throughout this study which is never arid, Jaurès, as if he had a presentiment that his work would be prematurely interrupted, scattered broad historical estimates of the Revolution and the part played by the army in the intellectual tradition of France. Events have verified the accuracy of certain of his views on war, on American idealism, on Lord Curzon's imperialistic Unionism. If, over and over again, he shows a moving sympathy for the proletariat labouring under hardship and ignorance, he none the less protested that "democracy has never meant for us socialists uniform mediocrity and common abasement." Faithful to his principle of unity, he summed up his teaching in a sentence: "There is a hierarchy in the world of intelligence, but it is not broken in two." He has borne witness to his deep understanding of French genius, supple and strong, realistic and chivalrous, in the pages on Montaigne and Rabelais or in this definition of the fatherland: "The apprenticeship of collective life and of the great

human sensibility, not in an abstract humanity which was, for long, in a state of dream merely and of uncertain preparation, but in the substantial and historical reality of a human group ample and rich in life, but sufficiently determined, concrete and tangible for the high spiritual impulse to have a natural base." If Jaurès, through this alliance of concrete intelligence and idealism, did not attain the artistic perfection which he did not scorn but could not aim at so long as a possibility for action offered itself to him, he remains one of the animators of his epoch.

Internationalism, for Anatole France the supreme desire of an unbiased humanist, for Jaurès the postulate of a monistic philosophy, is for Romain Rolland the faith of a moralist. No doubt "divine music" was for him as for his hero "the light which was to illumine his life"; but Gourmont's analysis was none the less incomplete when it stopped short at "his musicographic logic." The music preferred by Rolland is that the beauty of which assumes a moral significance. He ends his study on Monteverdi with this distinction: "Monteverdi was certainly one of the great Latin artists who can always adapt their talent to practical circumstances, very different in this from the great German composers who write without bothering whether what they write can be played or not." Between those who utilize the resources of their epoch and those who force upon it "a music of the future," it is felt where his sympathies lie. Hence his affection for the Romantics, for Berlioz, Wagner and Hugo Wolf. He himself has explained his own position at the end of an article on *Pelléas et Mélisande:* "Not that Debussy's art, any more than Racine's, suffices to represent French genius. There is quite another side to this genius, which is in no wise represented here. It is heroic action, the intoxication of reason, laughter, the passion for light, the France of Rabelais, of Molière, of Diderot, and, in music, we shall say (for want of better) the France of Berlioz and of Bizet. To tell the truth, it is this I prefer; but God forbid I should repudiate the other!" All Rolland is contained in these lines written in 1907. He has exalted in Beethoven, in Michelangelo, in Tolstoï, the apostles of this "heroic action" of which he found no such highly characterized representative in the art of his own country. He has tried, in *Colas Breugnon and Liluli*, to renew the laughter of Rabelais and of Diderot. He has consecrated the protagonists of his novels, Jean-Christophe and Clérambault, to "the passion for light." He has become one of the respected voices of Europe. To be a great French writer he has lacked the ability to enjoy without effort that France of Racine and Debussy, all delicate shades and

supplenesses, the triumph of a refined intelligence before which his heart has remained cold. He has rendered it full justice; but, not having loved it, he has never penetrated the secret of this perfection. He certainly admires "the gentle, luminous, veiled sky of the Ile de France"; but this harmony—the harmony of *Pelléas* and of *Bérénice*—is wanting in his work.

This is seen in reading his plays. In *Le Théâtre du Peuple* he shows the illusions of the managers of popular theatres and concludes, like a moralist: to have a new theatre, we must have a new people, a people of free minds. His last sentence is a repetition of Goethe's "in the beginning was Action." He employs the stage then for convictions in action. The three *Tragédies de la foi* and the three dramas of the *Théâtre de la Révolution* are above all valuable as a lesson in enthusiasm. Now Rolland's talent is not one of those which dissemble the arbitrariness of such an attitude. He attempts it however and combines the portrayal of Saint Louis, the hero of "religious exaltation" endeared to him by their common hatred of scepticism, with an intolerable melodrama in which clumsy psychology falls into the conventional and in which the style wavers between blank verse and the most prosaic form. Double stumbling-block of the purely ideological theatre: either the characters will, as in *Le Triomphe de la raison*, be symbols deprived of personal life; or else the desire of interest his public will deform the original conception of *Aert* and his drama of "national exaltation," of virile energy, will end by presenting us on the boards a young woman in fancy dress lost in a petty love plot. The eloquent intentions of *14 Juillet* and *Les Loups* are not sufficient to animate flesh and blood. As for *Danton*, this glorification of the tribune coud not help taking on the stage the violent relief of a popular print. Rolland's merits and defects combined to forbid him theatrical expression. This experience was however not lost, if it taught him what subjects suited his temperament. There was, between 1895 and 1905, a revival of hero-worship borne witness to by writers as different as Maeterlinck and Georges Sorel. The Affair had required certain men to take a virile stand, with enormous risks. Even for the sceptical Anatole France, Colonel Picquart was a hero. Rolland will invoke this example and that of the Boers in the preface to his Beethoven. Was not the best of his dramatic work an evocation of heroic figures, Saint Louis, Aert, Danton? Hampered by scenic requirements, this psychology, this exaltation of heroism were to unfold themselves at leisure in the book. A sure instinct inspired Romain Rolland with his lives of illustrious men. The introduction to the *Beethoven* states his plan: "Old Europe is lying benumbed in a heavy, vitiated

atmosphere. A sordid materialism weighs down thought . . . The world is suffocating. Let us open the windows. Let in free air. Let us breathe the breath of heroes." We can measure the distance covered from Symbolism when the hero was for some Mallarmé, for others Ruysbroeck or Novalis. At present he is called Beethoven. Rolland chose him because "there emanates from him a contagion of courage, a joy in battle, the intoxication of feeling God in one's consciousness," because his *durch Leiden Freude* is the "motto of every heroic soul." The passionate biography which celebrated at the same time "the foremost musician and the most heroic force of modern art," is certainly Romain Rolland's most finished work. Its publication in 1903 was, in Péguy's words, "not only the beginning of Romain Rolland's literary success and of that of the *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, but infinitely more than a beginning of literary fortune, it was a sudden moral revelation, an unveiled, revealed presentiment, the revelation, the flowering, the sudden communication of a great moral fortune." Continuing to fly the red flag of the heroes, Rolland wrote a *Vie de Michel-Ange*, based upon the "poignant contradiction between a heroic genius and a will which was not heroic"—an antithesis which suggested to him these characteristic reflections: "Let it not be expected of us after so many others to see there one more grandeur! We shall never say it is because a man is too great that the world does not suffice him. Mental disquietude is not a sign of greatness." This Sorbonne professor of the history of art had nothing of the æsthetic dilettante about him. Ten years after the *Beethoven* he wrote a *Vie de Tolstoï:* "The light just extinguished has been, for those of my generation, the purest illumining their youth." He saw in Tolstoï "the one true friend in all contemporary art." Alone, indeed, he had then demanded of the artist that religious and moral message which Rolland demanded in his turn.

The *Vies des hommes illustres* were passionate recreations. Rolland undertook at the same time an original creation. Choosing the subject where his critical knowledge could best nourish his inventions, he imagined the life of a great musician. In eight years he published the ten volumes of *Jean-Christophe* which conduct his hero from his birth in a city of Rhenish Germany to his death evoking the beloved stream which murmurs to him: "Hosanna to life! Hosanna to death!" The author describes step by step this road with its succession of revolts, failures, renewals of energy, where friendships, loves, artist quarrels, social cares interrupt a career which genius ends however by magnifying and which finds its reward in a noble appeasement.

Jean-Christophe is then a monument of the contemporary French novel. It resembles a little those enormous constructions of Strauss or of Mahler whose weakness Rolland has himself pointed out. Parts of the work are already crumbling, such as the *Foire sur la place* in which the polemic had but a timely interest and the descriptions of the workingmen's movements in *Le Buisson ardent* which gave an unfortunate melodramatic turn to the narrative. Moreover this story of Jean-Christophe Krafft is weighed down with digressions. The whole book entitled *Antoinette* is a *hors-d'œuvre.* There are too many women in Krafft's life, from Sabine and Ada to Anna and Grazia. They encumber the novel all the more for the reason that Romain Rolland has never been able to draw a feminine character. He lacks precisely for this the delicate qualities of the Racinian and Debussyist France. In the *Dialogue de l'auteur avec son ombre* he has claimed the right to have France judged by a German musician. He nevertheless felt the difficulty of this point of view and, to obviate it, placed next to Jean-Christophe a Frenchman, his friend Olivier Jeannin; but beside the vigorous Krafft Olivier appears pale and theoretical. The contrast brings out irrefutably the natural bent of Rolland's talent which once again goes to the representative of "heroic action." A last reproach and the gravest: moments when no impassioned sentiment inspires him with those eloquent formulas which are the successes of the enthusiastic moralist, *Jean-Christophe* contains whole pages of formless writing, of what Gourmont called "his chalky style." Here is an example: "The family, having vainly imposed its veto, closed completely for him who ignored its sacrosanct authority. The city, all those who counted, showing themselves, as usual, one with regard to what touched the moral dignity of the community, banded solidly against the imprudent couple." This quotation will suffice. It would be profitless to continue.

For examination of what Rolland lacks is really useful only to define more clearly what he possesses. His virtues are absolute sincerity, hatred of every baseness and every hypocrisy, love of heroism and of divine music. All this he has incarnated in Jean-Christophe Krafft and his creation lives. In spite of the childhood memories of celebrated musicians which Rolland has levied upon in the first volumes, Jean-Christophe lives from *L'Aube* where, in excellent pictures full of Germanic sensibility, he discovers the world, injustice, the majesty of "our Father Rhine" and luminous music. He lives, "a little fifteen-year-old Puritan," in *Le Matin;* and, in *L'Adolescent*, he spends his impetuosity "in a succession of insane forces and falls into the void." He lives in-

tensely in *La Révolte* where he rebels against the stupidity of the German town and also against "the false idealism" with which his childhood's idols are tainted and which Wagner did not escape. The plebeian element in him, deeply rooted in life, manifests itself equally amid the disorders of Parisian society and in his revolt against the stupid suicide proposed to him by Anna Braun. He bears in his soul the artist who wishes to express himself and who will succeed. His fevers, his sensuality, his mystic union with Grazia, his grief after Olivier's death are all transformed into music. Rolland has made this power of creative genius magnificently sensible. In describing it, this man who is less a writer than an apostle of heroism has sometimes achieved a moving literary beauty, as for example the account of the resurrection of the musician at the end of *Le Buisson ardent* and the passage in *L'Aube* where the genius of Beethoven haunts Jean Christophe asleep: "This gigantic soul entered him, distending his members and his soul, and seemed to give them colossal proportions. He walked on the world. He was like a mountain, and storms raged in him. Storms of fury! Storms of grief! . . . Ah! what grief! . . . But that did not matter! He felt so strong! . . . Suffer! To keep on suffering! . . . Ah! how good it is to be strong! How good it is to suffer when one is strong! . . ."

Colas Breugnon was not published until 1919. It had been in print since 1914. Rolland invites us to see in it the reaction against ten years' constraint in *Jean-Christophe's* armour which, "fitting me at first, had ended by becoming too tight"—a work of relaxation which none the less involves a sufficiently clear intention revealed by this sentence from *Clérambault:* "He was currently called sentimental by his adversaries; and certainly he was; but he knew it and because he was French he was able to laugh at it, make fun of himself." In telling this tale of a loquacious Nivernais of the time of Louis XIII, Rolland wished to divert his contemporaries. He does not seem to have succeeded. He renewed the attempt in *Liluli*, the triumph of the Illusion which subdues to his ruinous designs a Master-God disguised as an Arab merchant, a Truth heavily clad and gagged, a Reason which has stolen its bandage from Love. It causes the death of the inoffensive peasants Janot and Hansot as well as of the noble friends Altaïr and Antarès, it provokes war between the Gallipoulets and the Hurluberloches and drags Polichinelle himself down in the final catastrophe. To heighten the jest, Rolland, justifying himself by a quotation from Rabelais, saw fit to write *Colas* and *Liluli* in an extraordinary style strewn with more or less assonant *alexandrins* and

octosyllables. One will judge by these two examples whether this treatment increases or destroys the comical effect he was after:

"Breugnon, mauvais garçon, tu ris, n'as-tu pas honte?

—Que veux-tu, mon ami, je suis ce que je suis. Rire ne m'empêche pas de souffrir; mais souffrir n'empêchera jamais un bon Français de rire. Et qu'il rie ou larmoie, il faut d'abord qu'il voie . . ." (*Colas Breugnon.*)

"Tout doux! tout doux! soufflez un peu! quels dératés! vous ruisselez! Gare au déluge! Vous le fuyez, de la vallée, et sur les monts, dans vos paniers, vous l'apportez! . . . Mon ami, tu vas éclater." (*Liluli.*) [1]

In *La Nouvelle Journée* Rolland had written that "Europe resembled a huge armed vigil." In 1914 the war broke out. He was then in Switzerland, better situated than many for keeping an open mind but less well perhaps for discerning exactly where the heart of France beat. His enemies were able, with a certain show of truth, to accuse him of being so easily *au-dessus de la mêlée* because he was outside it. As usual however his attitude was loyal and courageous. As early as August 29, his open letter to Hauptmann virulently denounced German barbarism guilty of burning Louvain; but in his famous article, *Au-dessus de la mêlée* (which has given its title to the volume in which it is included), Rolland deplored and seemed to disapprove of "these singular encounters, Eucken against Bergson, Hauptmann against Maeterlinck, Rolland against Hauptmann." One week after the battle of the Marne he proclaimed his internationalism: "Our duty is to build, both broader and higher, dominating injustice and national hatreds, the walls of the town where the free and fraternal souls of the whole world should assemble." When to-day we reread these articles several sentences only of which, malevolently interpreted, then filtered into France, it is easy to see that the misunderstanding was caused above all by interested enmities and the stupidity of the censorship. A closer contact with the realities of his country would have warned Rolland that his image, "it is then a matter of waiting, guarding oneself as far as possible against the madness of Ajax," had not the same meaning in Paris and in Geneva. The simple publication of the noble *Lettre à ceux qui m'accusent* would have dissipated every suspicion by

[1] "Breugnon, you bad boy, you laugh, aren't you ashamed?"

"Well, my friend, I'm what I am. Laughing doesn't prevent me from suffering; but suffering will never prevent a good Frenchman from laughing; and whether laughing or crying, he must first of all see. . . ." (*Colas Breugnon.*)

"Gently! gently! Take a breath! What lively chaps! You stream! Look out for the deluge! You flee it, from the valley, and on the mountains, in your baskets, you bring it! . . . My friend, you'll burst." (*Liluli.*)

showing that Rolland accused not the peoples but their leaders, the intellectuals, of having failed in their most sacred duty. *Les Idoles* affirms this continuity in his meditations as a moralist. He reproaches the chiefs of European thought with not having been "characters." Faithful even in the storm to the ideal of *Beethoven*, of *Jean-Christophe* and of *Tolstoï*, this scrupulous honesty which had made him one of the counsellors of the European soul was incapable of admitting an excuse for repudiation.

Perhaps this admirable rigidity of a moralist's conscience has been partly responsible for that want of flexibility which is his real artistic failure. His first post-war book was awaited impatiently. *Pierre et Luce* is merely a brief Parisian love-story under the menace of the Gothas, terminated by the catastrophe at St. Gervais on Good Friday, 1918; but *Clérambault*, the "story of a free conscience during the war," written between 1916 and 1920, is a compact work. Unfortunately it brings no rejuvenation. Rolland maintains his conclusions. To the false ideal of unanimous life which, confronted with the war, ended in abdication, he opposes the heroic revolt of individual consciences. He condemns equally "the insanities of the German thinkers and the extravagances of Parisian talkers." Without refusing his homage to Lenin and Trotzky, "the heroic woodsmen," he rejects the proletarian dictatorship as completely as the ancient tyranny. For the moralist knows that the blemishes are in us as well as in our governments. On the plane of action we are always coming up against a dilemma of injustice: "We find there a bronze *Dikè* recognized by the mind, which it can even honour as a Law of the universe; but the heart does not accept it. The heart refuses to submit to it. Its mission is to revoke the Law of eternal war. Will it ever be able to do so? . . . Who knows? In any event, it is clear that its hope, its will, spring from the natural order. Its mission is supernatural and, properly speaking, *religious*." The writer insists that this adjective which he prints in italics be given its full meaning. Clérambault's last word is, in fact, an identification of Jesus and the free spirit, both eternally insurgent, eternally crucified, eternally renascent.

Eloquent pages do not, however, form an artistically living work. "This book," says the preface, "is not a novel but the confession of a free soul in the midst of the storm . . . Let nothing autobiographical be sought in it." Yet the whole leaves a very equivocal impression. All the end of the book, at least, is purely romantic, and it is the law of the novel which forces the author to kill Clérambault. If it contains nothing autobiographical in point of facts, it is none the

less difficult to admit that in his numerous discourses Clérambault alone is "occupied with expressing his overflowing and diffuse ego." Clérambault is but an idea of man. Jean-Christophe was a living man. Will Romain Rolland remain the prisoner of his own apostolate or will he liberate himself from it? Will he see the burning bush and, without our respect for his high "religious probity" being diminished by it, will he give us the book in which he will finally reconcile the two Frances which are not opposed in the music where the elusive Melisande receives the solemn kiss of the sage Arkël?

3. INTERNATIONALISM AND NATIONALISM

Verhaeren's tendencies towards internationalism were unequivocally declared, as early as 1898, in *Les Aubes*, "the third and last section of a series begun with *Les Campagnes hallucinées* and *Les Villes tentaculaires*." This drama where imagination and realism come into conflict, where the lyrical couplets take flight from a massive prose, has for protagonist the tribune Herénien: "We are living," he declares, "in dreadful days of terror, of agonies and of renewals. . . Utopia folds its wings and lights upon the earth." Hérénien has cherished the dream of "killing war" and he realizes his project. He reconciles the inhabitants of Oppidamagne and the army which besieges it in a fraternal peace. The late enemies throw down or burn their arms. It is true Hérénien pays for this triumph with his life; but "dawn is breaking," that dawn prophesied in *Les Forces tumultueuses*. If however, in such hours of elation, his inspiration passed beyond the frontiers, if Verhaeren appeared as the new century's Hugo, the sonorous echo of every contemporary aspiration, he did not nevertheless forget his fatherland. His genius did not consent to soar to abstractions until it had rooted itself in a solid, concrete reality. Though becoming European he remained passionately Flemish. From 1904 to 1911 appeared five collections grouped together under the general title of *Toute la Flandre*. In it he celebrated alternately youthful tenderness, the garland of the dunes, heroes, gabled towns, the plains. Tales of the heroic past, childhood memories, peaceful or hallucinated landscapes traversed by the Scheldt, "sombre, violent and magnificent"—Verhaeren revived all this in a hymn of splendour and of filial tenderness. Intensely Flemish, intensely human, the *Epilogue of Toute la Flandre* exalted his two loves, each sustained by the other.

After *La Multiple Splendeur*, the high value of which at the confluence of his work we have pointed out, the poet gave free rein to

his lyricism in *Les Rythmes souverains* and *Les Blés mouvants*. His imagination, taking toll of the centuries, roused magnificent symbolical visions (*Le Paradis, Michel-Ange*); or else, friendly and gentle, it lingered to contemplate "the luminous health of things" in a familiar setting (*Le Chant de l'eau*). At times he chose some humble wayfarer on his beloved plains and, under the sovereign spell of his speech, the old village fiddler was transfigured without ceasing to be real:

Doucement, lentement, le vieux ménétrier
Se lève, et puis s'en va par le prochain sentier
Et puis s'efface et disparait dans le mystère
Autoritaire.

(*Le Ménétrier.*)

At times he described a leader of peoples, "sincere and false," strong and cunning, proud and solitary.

Laissant sa conscience et sa raison lui dire
Qu'il était bien, en ce moment,
Logiquement,
Lui seul, l'empire

(*Un Maître.*)

a character who has haunted his individualistic thought, whom he has glorified in Hérénien and in Jacques d'Artevelde, whose ambition he has denounced with a hostility mingled with respect in the Pollux of *Hélène de Sparte.*

There is scarcely a great European poet who has resisted the temptation to interpret in his own manner these Greek legends which are our common patrimony. The interest roused by Verhaeren's effort is sufficiently proved by the fact that his book was translated into German and into Russian even before it had been revealed to the French public. There is no attempt at historical reconstruction, at local colour in this "lyrical" tragedy. The violent dramatist of *Philippe II* and of *Le Cloître* is recognized in the handling of the plot. *Hélène de Sparte* shows the return of the queen, soul and body appeased, resolved to sweeten Menelaus' old age by her sober tenderness; but such a beauty cannot appear without bringing love in its train. Helen is assailed by the passion of her brother Castor and of Electra who should have been her enemy. The motive of the drama is the fierce desire which adds two murders to the long list of crimes, breaks Helen's soul and delivers the throne to Pollux. The pathos of *Hélène de Sparte* resides much less in these sombre visions than in the lyrical commentaries they provoke. We find here successively the harshness of his first poems in Electra's

imprecations and the gentleness of *Les Heures claires* in Helen's lamentations after her husband's death.

Les Flammes hautes, a volume dedicated "to those who love the future," the proofs of which were already corrected before the war, showed him still in this attitude of supreme welcome to all humanity, with a rude individualistic and pantheistic pride, with a fraternal tenderness in that beautiful ode *Au passant d'un soir:*

Je saisirai les mains, dans mes deux mains tendues,
A cet homme qui s'en viendra
Du bout du monde, avec son pas.

The invasion of Belgium by Germany was a blow to his ideal. *Les Ailes Rouges de la guerre* is the only book of our epoch comparable to *Les Châtiments*. In splendid lyrical accents Verhaeren celebrated the valour of his compatriots (*Ceux de Liège*), in avenging pages he exalted France and stigmatized Germany (*France et Allemagne*). He devoted his talent as poet and orator to his country, and it is known that he was returning from a patriotic lecture when he was crushed by a train at Rouen, November 27, 1916. His death robbed Belgium of her greatest French poet. Destiny replied tragically to the sublime cry of Love in *Un Lambeau de Patrie:*

Jadis, je t'ai aimée avec un tel amour
Que je ne croyais pas qu'il eût pu croître un jour.
Mais je sais maintenant la ferveur infinie
Qui t'accompagne, ô Flandre, à travers l'agonie,
Et t'assiste et te suit jusqu'au bord de la mort.
Et même il est des jours de démence et de rage
Où mon cœur te voudrait plus déplorable encor
Pour se pouvoir tuer à t'aimer davantage.

The book from which these verses are taken was dedicated "to Maurice Maeterlinck, fraternally." Full meaning must be given to the word. Before the fraternity of patriotic grief, these two noble Belgian writers had struggled for years, each in his fashion, for human fraternity. *Le Trésor des humbles* and *La Sagesse et la Destinée* appealed to men's experience only. In *La Vie des abeilles*, Maeterlinck explored the secrets of animal life, from its humble beginnings patiently followed to its highest movements poetically described in "the nuptial flight." At the end of this study in which he constantly compared intelligence and instinct, he inclined to think these two faculties had perhaps after all a similar duty: "Bees do not know whether they will eat the honey they hive. We are equally ignorant who will profit by the spiritual power we bring into the universe." In *L'Intelligence des fleurs*, after

quoting and commenting upon numerous instances where flowers have shown an extraordinary power of adaptation to the difficulties of their environment, he concluded: "The Earth Genius, which is probably that of the entire world, acts, in the vital struggle, exactly as a man would act." He believed himself authorized by his observations to go a little farther: "Is it likely," he asked, "when we find such a sum of intelligence scattered through life, that this life should not function intelligently?"

A question divested of anguish by the certainty of an affirmative answer. Maeterlinck had become a kind of world-adviser. His spiritual attitude was that of a modern Marcus Aurelius repeating the words of a universal welcome. "Everything that perfectly befits you, befits me, O World! Nothing for me is premature or late, which is seasonable for you." No problem appeared to him so material as to exclude a profound beauty. In *Le Double Jardin* he spoke of gambling and motoring, he praised the sword. In *L'Intelligence des fleurs*, written among the roses of Grasse the perfumes of which he has celebrated, he considered with the same gravity the passing of the hours, the uneasiness of our morality, the revival of boxing and the poetic value of *King Lear*. A moral essay in the Anglo-Saxon style (*Le Pardon des injures*) was followed by a minute analysis of scientific psychology (*L'Accident*). He studied with equal firmness the question of immortality and that of social duty. His speech, insinuating to espouse the complexity of things, recovered, when he believed the time ripe, the authority of the philosopher: "There is, for those who possess, but one certain duty, which is to strip themselves of what they have, so as to become like the masses who have nothing."

At this epoch, he seemed to reserve the subtleties of thought for his dramatic work. The failure of *Joyzelle* is highly instructive. This play has against it a complete artistic error, the employment of blank verse which Maeterlinck had already overdone in *Monna Vanna*. It continues here in long passages or, after correct *alexandrins*, the ear is shocked by faulty *alexandrins:*

"*Tu dors profondément, et tandis que tu dors, je perds toute ma science et redeviens semblable à mes aveugles frères, qui ne savent pas encore qu'il y a sur cette terre autant de dieux cachés que de cœurs qui palpitent.*" [1]

It is surprising that Maeterlinck, master of a musical prose, should not hesitate to end an act with this Cornelian but halting line:

1 "You sleep deeply, and while you sleep, I lose all my science and become like my blind brothers who do not yet know that there are on this earth as many hidden gods as throbbing hearts."

"S'il y va de sa vie, oui." "Et vous, Joyzelle?" "Non." [1]

Joyzelle further bewildered the public, however, by the theoretical fashion in which the moral problem is presented. Here, as in *Monna Vanna*, Maeterlinck has sought the extreme case, all the more convincing because it is more abnormal. In the two tragedies the woman is forced to give herself to an enemy in order to save the man she loves. Why does the conflict always assume this sensual form? Maeterlinck declared we no longer believe in the importance of chastity since we have freed ourselves from Christianity. Did he perhaps wish to show that obsession survived faith? However this may be, it is curious to remark that three of his plays come back, in the last analysis, to the same subject: a beautiful woman subjected to a terrible ordeal contemplated by an old man in order to derive from this crisis a lesson of wisdom. From such a point of view the progress is manifest. Mélisande dies and Arkel remains overwhelmed by fatality. Vanna triumphs thanks to Prinzivalle's love and Marco can applaud her. Joyzelle fights with no external support and Merlin, at once spectator and actor, salutes with his last gesture the decision of justice. The demonstration is brilliant but it is obtained at the price of a convention rather difficult to accept and the centre of the interest is displaced. The hero of *Joyzelle* is Merlin—a Prospero whose power "has nothing magic or supernatural about it." It is for him to proclaim Maeterlinck's confidence in the soul, "the whisper of the little voice which has nothing to tell me but which alone is right"; for him to prevent hasty generalizations: "Let us not make laws out of a few odds and ends picked up in the night encompassing our thoughts."

This prudence in affirming before the unknowable, which is the last word of the Maeterlinckian *Tempest*, is found in an essay, *L'Inquiétude de notre morale*, where his thought questions itself scrupulously. He distinguishes three moralities: that of "common sense," that of "good sense" and that of "mystical reason." Shunning the first, he warns us not to stop at the second. We must "go further than simple justice. It is beyond this simple justice that the morality of those who hope in the future begins." Very few precepts are necessary and they are not at all complex—those a child could dictate; but it is important that they should really have penetrated us, for "we cannot flatter ourselves we have understood a truth until it is impossible for us not to conform our life to it." Daily, we should profit by

[1] "If her life is at stake, yes." "And you, Joyzelle?" "No."

the humblest circumstances to awaken the sublime in us: "It is in this part of our consciousness, fairy-like perhaps but not chimerical, that we should acclimatize ourselves and find delight."

"Fairy-like but not chimerical." It would be impossible to invent a better motto for *L'Oiseau bleu.* Maeterlinck likes to reveal the link between the different stages of his meditation by a recurrence of the same gestures, of the same symbolical words. The tender expressions in *Le Double Jardin*—"Friendship without love and love without friendship are two half-happinesses which sadden men." "How would feminine grace save had it not its innocent vanities?"—are sisters to *Alladine's* avowal: "I love thee . . . more than her I love." Joyzelle's meeting with Lancéor is as mysterious as Mélisande's with Golaud. The liberation of the stars and of the nocturnal perfumes in *L'Oiseau bleu* recalls the freeing of the captives in *Ariane.* The humour and good nature which we shall find again in *Le Miracle de Saint-Antoine* are here mingled with dramatic and philosophic scenes like the revolt of the forest folk . . . Never before had Maeterlinck's art shown this ease which amuses children at the very moment when it forces men to meditate upon their destiny. He has never surpassed the profoundly pathetic beauty of the Cemetery and of the Garden of Happiness.

In *Les Dieux de la guerre* (1907) he denounced with dismay the madness of men who, sole representatives of intelligence on earth, abandoned the mission of settling their quarrels to ill-understood explosives: "It is to these unclassifiable monsters that we confide the almost divine task of extending our reason and dividing the just from the unjust." During the war he served his country by pen and by speech. *Le Bourgmestre de Stilmonde* is a more effective testimony than many an inflammatory declamation. It is in the same spirit of sober indignation that, in the preface to *Les Débris de la guerre,* he summed up his militant labours: "I sought to raise myself above the strife; but the higher I rose, the more I heard its cries, the better I perceived its madness and its horror, the justice of our cause and the infamy of the other. It is probable that one day, when time will have wearied the recollections and repaired the ruins, wise men will assert that we were mistaken and did not look high enough, that everything can be forgotten, everything explained and that everything should be understood. This means that they will not know more than we know to-day and that they will not have seen what we saw."

The problem of death had always solicited his grave attention. It filled his first plays with fright. *L'Intelligence des fleurs* ended with

an essay on immortality. In 1913 he devoted a book to explaining the "there are no dead" of *L'Oiseau bleu*. Impossible to flee the idea of it: it "clouds everything with its shadow." Our mistake is that "we confide it to the obscure hands of instinct and do not accord it an hour of our intelligence." He undertakes then the investigation, by lucid reason, of the various hypotheses—annihilation, survival of consciousness, neo-theosophical reincarnation and neo-spiritualistic communications. He rejects the brutal imaginings which, one way or another, do violence to what we know of life. He proposes "as the most probable of these temporary hypotheses" that of "a modified consciousness" which reabsorbs itself without annihilation into the universal consciousness. Supported by so much experience, he reassures the timid with this pantheistical consolation: "The Infinite could not wish us harm, seeing that if it tormented the least among us eternally, it would torment something which it cannot wrest from itself, hence itself as a whole." To give way to despair would be insane: "The unknown and the unknowable are and perhaps always will be necessary to our happiness."

Pale certainties, it would be easy to say, compared with the assertions of Marcus Aurelius and Spinoza; but the comparison finally brings into full view the originality of the position occupied by Maeterlinck. If, like the supreme philosophers, he seeks a morality, he has taken care to distinguish between "the morality of those who remain on the bank of the great river and the morality of those who breast the current." Where their sole ambition was to attain the truth, he intends to conquer happiness. Finally he was sworn not to invoke that divine idea which supported all their systems. We know nothing which transcends man, he declares again in *Le Grand Secret* where he has passed in review every form of occultism from the earliest times to the present. However disturbing "certain posthumous apparitions almost scientifically demonstrated" may be, we are not authorized to take the decisive step: "We know, in short, that there has never been an ultra-human revelation . . . and that all man thinks he knows concerning God, his origin and his ends, has been derived by him from his own reason." Such is the point he has reached at present: "It is little if one loves illusion, it is much if one prefers truth." The inquiry he has carried on for thirty years in these veiled realms testifies, at least, to the progress of an intelligence which has grown stronger without diminishing the wealth of the soul, and he has shown how a man of our time could embellish his "mystical reason" until it attained the magnificent transfiguration of life in *Les Jardins des bonheurs*.

4. CHARLES PÉGUY

Charles Péguy's life and work are the most complete French social literary document between the Affair and the war. They bring the testimony of what he called "the sacrificed generation." Born at Orléans in 1873 Péguy passed through the *enseignement secondaire*, the Ecole Normale and the Sorbonne, failed for the *agrégation* and began as a writer in, 1897, with the first *Jeanne d'Arc* "dedicated to all those men and women who will have lived . . . for the establishment of the universal Socialist republic." He was then a Marxian socialist and a Dreyfusist. It was the epoch of *Marcel, premier dialogue de la Cité harmonieuse.* In 1900, he founded *Les Cahiers de la quinzaine. De la grippe* showed him already at loggerheads with the Guesdists and studying "the decomposition of Dreyfusism in France." He soon broke with Jaurès and with Combism in which he saw the political exploitation of a mystic victory. He seemed to hesitate between anarchy and a dissident socialism. In 1905, with *Notre Patrie* and *Les Suppliants parallèles*, he took his stand as a defender of patriotism and of the traditions, without however joining any party. A new evolution led him to an individualistic Catholicism, and it was in this last state of mind, between 1910 and 1914, that his masterworks in prose and almost all his poems, were composed. He was mobilized and in September, 1914, was killed at the head of his company.

For fifteen years the *Cahiers* were one of the centres of French thought. They had the honour of revealing to the larger public the Tharauds, Benda, Halévy, Rolland, Suarès and Hamp. France, Sorel, Vuillaume, Mille contributed to them. In spite of the lustre of such names *Les Cahiers de la quinzaine* remain Péguy's monument; and this monument should not become a tomb but a temple open in the heart of the city.

The difficulty of drawing a portrait of Péguy arises from the abundance of the material. For fifteen years he filled the *Cahiers* with his confidences. Since his death numerous studies have been devoted to him. The piety of his friends has revealed many details hidden during his lifetime.[1] Drawing upon all these sources, it is easier to understand the evolution of the man and of his work. Millerand very justly indicates as his dominant passion a thirst for truth. To seek it and to tell it was the program of his *Cahiers*, "note-books of information, without partisan spirit." "We shall tell the whole truth," he announces. On this point he admitted no compromise: "He who does

[1] We must note, first of all, the importance of the *Entretiens* taken down by his faithful friend, Joseph Lotte.

not bawl the truth, when he knows the truth, becomes the accomplice of the liars and the forgers." His distrust of Jaurès began the day he suspected him of accepting "a State truth." He always said brutally what he considered the truth, even should he be accused later of contradiction. Does he believe in the truth of internationalism? He declares himself superbly "a mason of the coming city." In 1900, Catholicism is closed to him. He fights it: "There is not only, between the Catholics and us, the distance between a vain imagination and a sincere universal criticism, but truly there is the irreconcilability between a perverse imagination and a modest reason, friendly to health." He never stops half-way. Unreligious, he demands the separation of metaphysics and the State. He never hesitates, if he comes up against a blank wall, to turn back abruptly: "It will never be known how many cowardices the fear of not appearing sufficiently advanced has made us Frenchmen commit." He wrote that in 1905 because, at the menace of a war, his humanitarianism had evaporated: "Every man heard in himself, found, listened to, as something familiar and known, this profound resonance, this voice which did not come from without, this voice of memory engulfed there and, as it were, heaped up, one knew not since when or for what." He denounced the Pacifist hypocrisy which curses war and derives imaginative enjoyment from the idea of it. He had never brought a half-courage to civil war or to foreign war: "This second loyalty, which is as much mental as moral, consists in treating war itself, after it has become inevitable, as if it were war and not as if it were peace. Quite simply, it consists in really fighting, when one does fight." Truth, in his opinion, never lies in a happy medium. It is extreme, and speech should equal it in brutality: Péguy's dream was to be

Le plus hardi faucheur au temps de la moisson,
Le plus hardi chanteur au temps de la chanson.

When war became necessary, he prepared himself for it, foreseeing even his epitaph as a soldier:

Heureux ceux qui sont morts dans une juste guerre!

When touched by grace, he came forward proudly "as a Christian and as a Catholic." When he drew up the balance-sheet of his generation, he did not mask what appeared to him the truth: "It is we who count. It is we who bear witness. It is we who are the proof . . . We have been great. We have been very great." A volunteer of the militant truth, he deserves the praise he accorded himself:

Nous sommes ces soldats qui grognaient par le monde,
Mais qui marchaient toujours et n'ont jamais plié.

"Grumble and keep on marching," was Péguy's motto. All his life he was sustained by a mystic faith, by a mystic hope. The socialistic proclamations in *Marcel* are purely mystical: "The harmonious city has as citizens all the living who are souls . . . The citizens of the harmonious city have healthy sentiments only." With the same serene affirmation Madame Gervaise will make God and the Virgin speak, will arrange the theological and parabolical virtues hieratically, will describe authoritatively the Eternal Father's wonder at the miracle of hope. This power of mysticism dictates to Péguy his hatred for the modern world which abases everything, even death. It permits him to remain to the end, in spite of bitternesses and disappointments, "a republican soul." It sustains his belief that "metaphysics is perhaps the only quest for knowledge which is direct, literally." Note this "literally." It is essential to Péguy's intelligence. His mysticism is indeed concrete. It is realistic, readily popular: "I am not at all the intellectual who descends and condescends to the people. I am people." This phrase has several meanings. The Dreyfus affair appeared to him "an elect affair." As early as 1902, he formulated the distinction between the political Dreyfusists who coined the victory to the profit of their sectarianism and the mystical Dreyfusists, "the perpetual Dreyfusists," who struggled for the sole triumph of Justice and remain mobilized in its service—a leading idea he returned to and developed in *Notre Jeunesse.*[1] However violently Péguy fought in the world of action, his true fatherland is this mystic realism. When the two universes conflict, the first is obliterated for it exists merely as a function of the second. The last lines of *Clio* bear witness to this contrast and to Péguy's solution of it: "You cannot imagine yourself presiding over the fiftieth series of your *Cahiers;* but you can very well imagine, and I imagine with you ('my child,' she said to me with great gentleness), what you will think the day of your death."

What is the content of this mysticism or, rather, about what objects has this mystical disposition crystallized? The first, as well as the most profound, of the influences undergone by Péguy is that of Bergson, his master at the Ecole Normale, towards whom his fidelity

1 For a clear idea of this ideological liquidation of the Affair in *Notre Jeunesse* and *Victor Marie, Comte Hugo,* it is necessary to read, in addition to Georges Sorel's *Revolution Dreyfusienne,* the *Apologie pour notre passé,* by Daniel Halévy, former Dreyfusist, inheritor of a liberal tradition, historian and critic, who, after making the figure of his friend live again in *Charles Péguy et les Cahiers,* has become his successor with the series of *Les Cahiers Verts.*

never failed. His last published work, the *Note sur M. Bergson,* is an homage of the vassal to the overlord who has found the key of a "new rationalism," who gave philosophy a shock such as it had not felt since Descartes. What Péguy praises Bergson for was having cleaned up the old intellectualism, having restored to the mind a suppleness which can espouse the complex sinuosities of reality. Who does not feel that Péguy, at bottom, was grateful to Bergson for having liberated his thought and his style from all properly intellectual discipline? In the *Note sur M. Descartes,* he pays another debt when felicitating himself that, thanks to Bergson, we may hereafter know what we say when we speak of "habit, of ageing, of hardening." This terror of the inevitable ageing constitutes, as Michel Arnauld has noted, the tragic haunting of *Clio.* The problem of history preoccupied Péguy. In *Zangwill* he indicated the error of his modern method, "*méthode de la grande ceinture.*" His experience had proved to him that "there is the real and there is the historical . . . They are unwedged one from the other, they are unwedged one on the other," as he says in *A nos amis, à nos abonnés,* one of his numerous personal apologies. The modern intellectual party pictures, according to him, "the succession of the metaphysics and of the philosophies—of the religions—as an uninterrupted linear progress, continuous or discontinuous." If he was doubly right, if ageing really meant hardening, if Péguy's dearest ideas were menaced with being ranged in their place, in an historical docket, Péguy—whose ideal was to remain a living influence—would die completely. The violence with which his mysticism identified itself with the Bergsonian doctrine is an instinctive gesture of self-defence.

Did Bergson at least offer him a sure fortress? Had not the philosopher professed that, between genius and talent, there are perhaps a difference of nature and a sharp gap? How Péguy brandishes this sword which destroys all the "linear" explanations in *La Situation faite à l'histoire et à la sociologie dans les temps modernes:* "It is not absolutely clear how the essential works, *Pèlerins d'Emmaüs, La Neuvième, Polyeucte, the Pensées,* are made. They are given, like life itself. Intelligence would hurt them rather—" principles of a mystic æstheticism which permit Péguy the better to accentuate the preferences of his French and Greek culture, to praise Homer and the tragic poets, to dethrone Racine in order to install Corneille in his place, to repeat that "*Polyeucte* is the greatest and most perfect work that will ever be seen." However, even in this domain of *coups d'état,* his mysticism remains realistic. The most curious example of it is probably the insistence with which, in various works, he has commentated Hugo's poems. With him, Péguy is en-

tirely at ease. He ignores none of his trickeries. He enjoys them on the contrary, appreciates the skillful "mortising of Napoleon into Hugo" thanks to which the poet has filled the nineteenth century with his presence. Péguy, the continuer of *Le Roi Dagobert*, feels himself brother to the Hugo who, in *Le Sacre*, renewed the song of *Malbrouck*. He delights in the audacious Jerimadeth which would be sought in vain on the map; and then Hugo seems to him, as opposed to the "*viellard*" Leconte de Lisle, the very type of the "*vieux*" who knows how to age without his soul encumbering itself with dead-wood, with "all done." He is the poet needed by the French, by that "antithetical people" always however "acquainted with hope," as he makes God say in *Le Porche de la deuxième Vertu*.

Let us not be astonished that, through Corneille, Hugo and the French, Bergson has brought us to God. It is the road followed by Péguy. Let us add still another intermediary: Jeanne of Arc, a curiously Bergsonian Jeanne. In the long dialogue of *Le Mystère de la Charité*, Madame Gervaise has given Jeannette all the arguments which would satisfy an ordinary Christian. If she continues none the less to dream of "Orléans, you who are in the land of the Loire," is it not because she exercises the Bergsonian privilege? Jeanne refuses to enter into linear series. This violent rupture is called genius in æsthetics and, in religion, sanctity. Jeanne is a saint and Péguy's Catholicism is also a saint's. No doubt he is somewhat disconcerting from a strictly orthodox point of view: "I live without sacraments," he says to Lotte. "It is a wager." In the *Descartes* he warns us he "took seriously everything in the catechism. When he was little. That has led him far." Mgr. Battifol, studying this Catholicism which would not accept any other guide than its catechism, concluded: "Péguy has sought the peace of his soul in his *Porche* of hope. He has arranged that all alone, yes, but it is not the surest way!" This friendly judgment stresses very pertinently the realistic character of the mysticism in the Péguy of *Eve:*

Car le surnaturel est lui-même charnel
Et l'arbre de la grâce est raciné profond
Et plonge dans le sol et cherche jusqu'au fond
Et l'arbre de la race est lui-même éternel!

His Jeanne invoked the coming "of a saint who should succeed." He, too, conformably to the pragmatic element in Bergsonism, aspired to success. Now had he not succeeded when he had had the hardihood to give his children to the Virgin? She had accepted and protected them. He who refused "to put morals and religion together" was not

unaware of the exceptional character of his situation; but he was conscious of playing an exceptional part also: "I have a function. I have enormous responsibilities. At bottom, it is a Catholic renaissance that is occurring through me. I must see what is, and hold fast." He held fast because he was acquainted with that hope in which he had seen the most miraculous of virtues. He held, sustained by the noble ideal he has defined in his *Descartes:* "It is not enough for the Christian world to reveal its being and give the fullness of its love and of its being before God. It must also give a certain high image of itself to the pagan world"; and he did not conceal from Lotte his ambition to "cover in the Christian the same surface as Goethe in the pagan."

Is pride then Péguy's last word? It might be believed, to hear him speak of his *Jeanne d'Arc:* "And what art! There are resonances in it! Harmonies! There has been nothing like it in the way of musical prose!" Johannet's analysis rightly reveals something of Rousseau in him. In these *Entretiens* he speaks of himself as a great writer; but read the following: "The French Academy is all very fine, but I should not be elected for ten or fifteen years, and in the interval I must bring up my children . . . I have had more than fifty articles in the past eight months. That has not given me a subscriber . . . It is as hard for me to live as it was ten years ago . . . I am poor, poor. I need the Academy . . . I have no respite. I must have no respite. Therefore I produce all the time, in the train, on the tramway." There is the drama which tore Péguy's soul, a creative soul full of scorn for "temporal fame" yet avid of this fame because it would have brought him the money his poverty needed and the honours for which his pride thirsted—honours the world granted many others to whom he felt himself so superior. One must measure the force of the holds temptation had on him the better to admire the beauty of his resistance. For he never gave in, he never consented to keep silent as to what he deemed the truth in order to conciliate or keep protectors. There is a sanctity in this scrupulous probity. He who so loved the differentiation of words and ideas must have been particularly satisfied the day he distinguished in *Clio* the "little people" from the "common people" with whom they are too often confounded. His Bergsonian mysticism found at least this recompense that it always escaped "that growing dullness, that ageing which turns a poet into a vulgar man, and turns a new man into a vulgar man, and turns a man of heart into a vulgar man."

Péguy then achieved his temporal salvation. Is it the same with his work? He often expressed this anxiety, that he might leave history

—which judges by proofs alone, by the measurable—no positive witness of the greatness he knew to be his. He scattered much of his talent in timely tracts. An extraordinary spirit animates those *Cahiers* in which he relaxes. The subscribers have not forgotten the conversations in which appear Citizen Doctor and Citizen Sickman, Marcel and Pierre Baudoin and Pierre Deloire. They will not cease to love the pleas *pro domo* of *Entre deux trains* and *Pour Moi.* The "business manager's prose" and the details of that impressive bookkeeping will always touch them. Péguy will live again for them entirely in this title: *Victor-Marie, Comte Hugo, à moi Comte, deux mots* or in this parenthesis: "(In order to know to what extent the Invalides is a perfectly perfect monument, it must be looked at, for example, from the drawing-room windows of the apartment situated on the fifth floor of 2, Avenue de Villars)"; but the charm of this familiar disorder will quickly pass. Will the comic *Chanson du roi Dagobert* find grace? Or among all these occasional writings, will not the future retain only a few admirable portraits—Péguy, Zévaès, Clemenceau, Millerand, Bernard Lazare, "prophet of Israel," the man who has known best that conscience "is the supreme, the only jurisdiction," and the dazzling descriptions of Jaurès culminating in the epic parade of *Notre jeunesse?* Will this apology for a past survive or will there remain afloat only the Jaurès, some eloquent protests and the pages in which Péguy shows those Jews of whom he flattered himself he was the sole Christian confidant sending their prophets to the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, section of religious sciences? Will the three *Situations* be reduced to a searching portrait of Renan? In fifty years, will *Clio* still be read, or only, after a rapid summary of the amusing parody of the pseudo-scientific methods of the Sorbonne, the powerful analysis of temporal optics, of concave or convex menisci? It is not for those to choose who would like to keep all, knowing it impossible.

For there is in Péguy an incomparable confusion. Bergson who helped him so much in other ways here rendered him the bad service of authorizing him to call living order what should really have been called disorder. Not only are his titles misleading, *L'Argent* with *L'Argent, suite* constituting, at the same time as a "work porch," a refutation of pacifism; but he erected into a method the habit of speaking of everything apropos of everything. He remains at the mercy of the first text he meets, from Hégésippe Moreau to the Gospels. If he gets hold of an occasion for commentary, his whole development bifurcates. No doubt he always returns to his subject; but has his reader followed him in this excursion? That the labels of the two notes in which he speaks of M. Bergson and of M. Descartes, can be

inverted, is not grave. What is dangerous, and dangerous for his own fame, is that one must go and look in some corner of the *Descartes* for the best picture of his proud simplicity as a peasant, the grandson of an illiterate woman, who has risen in life and turns towards his past: "He looks towards his race . . . And he goes back and plunges not only with joy into this immense anonymity. He buries himself in it with a secret joy. But he also buries himself in it with a sort of accomplishment, of crowning, of plenitude of humility; and would he not bury himself in it with a crowning and a plenitude of pride? And even more, perhaps, with some sort of taste and success and plenitude of annihilation."

That is what is beautiful and great. Péguy is great each time he reconciles the two inspirations he has opposed at the end of *Dagobert:* that of the "educated" and of the "fresh, of the ignorant" who have learned nothing in books. His style is that of an educated man who wished to become ignorant again, with the result that he makes us think sometimes of the noise of an automobile which cannot get started, sometimes, according to Johannet's ingenious definition, "of the style Bergson ought to have but has not." His one method is obstinate repetition. His thought moves only when cudgelled with words: "Such is our meagre situation. We are meagre. We are thin. We are a little blade. We are as it were crushed, as it were flattened between all the antecedent generations, on one hand, and on the other, an already thick layer of succeeding generations." He holds that ideas are realities as concrete as things, that language should slip into their least anfractuosities to make sure of having explored everything. "The same failure, two failures mutually complementary, two failures mutually contrary, mutually inverse, mutually reciprocal, two failures the same, one failure conjugated"—a disturbing mixture of precision and of nonsense, of simplicity and of refinement. It will be found (two refinements mutually complementary, the same) in his typography. He flattered himself that he manipulated types like words, made them yield their whole meaning. He harries the question marks and plays like a virtuoso on the parenthesis: "A little truth(s)" . . . "It is just as if there were (no)Sunday . . . Now we must work (during) the week." It is moreover easy to see why he writes that "all eternity is (like) an instant in the hollow of the divine hand" or that Rembrandt has too often repeated "the same design(s)." [1] In such refinements Bergsonism which wishes to keep all the concreteness of life in the abstract expression, overtakes the extreme intellectualism of Mallarmé.

[1] *Le(s) même(s) dessin(s). Tr.*

Péguy's characteristic method is, however, the emuneration by series of appositions massively added up, forming a sort of battering-ram: "You, Chartres, unique city of France, unique cathedral of the world, Chartres, diocese, unique city of the kingdom of France, Chartres, who are consecrated to Notre-Dame, Chartres, consecrated, dedicated, given to Notre-Dame, Chartres, who are consecrated . . ." His verse abuses this tendency to litanize. The greater part of the *Tapisserie de Sainte-Geneviève* is constructed on two enumerations: "the arms of Jesus . . . the arms of Satan." The whole achieves a powerful monotony; but how many weaknesses in the detail, how many improvisations which seem to be guided only by the desire to exhaust the rhymes in *-ure*, in *-esse* or in *-ri*. He carries perversity so far as to choose the most rigorous form, that of the sonnet. It appears calculated to keep him from running over. Then he invents (*Sainte Geneviève*, 1 and 2) writing two sonnets the second of which will be merely a countertrace, an amplification of the first. At the beginning of the *Mystère de la Charité*, Jeannette recites the paternoster. This done she begins over again, in the negative. Likewise the life of Jesus is painted from a double viewpoint, in its reality and as a negation of all that a son owes his mother. Subtle intentions, but soon drowned by an inexhaustible loquacity.

The share of rubbish is enormous in Péguy. Everything contributes to it, his qualities and his defects alike. Does he wish to be simple? He will make Hauviette speak of "*ouvrage bien faite*" [1] and of a "*rigolo*" [1] event. Madame Gervaise will talk to us of "the Virgin and her boy" and of the world which "bored" Jesus. At times the comic predominates:

Ainsi, dit Dieu, tout se joue trois fois. Le prophète parle avant.
Mon fils parle pendant
Le saint parle après.
Et moi je parle toujours.

(*Mystère des Saints-Innocents.*)

He talks in fact for two hundred pages, as Péguy alone can make him talk, and the measure is full. Not that he goes on at random. There is always a construction in his immense monologues and all the episodes of *Le Porche* are welded within by the common idea of Hope. There is something mediæval about Péguy. His three mysteries must be regarded as three cathedral porches with great figures: Jeanne, who mingles with her sanctity an ideal of "French knighthood"; Mme. Gervaise, a strange mixture of mystic exaltation and of heightened realism; Hauviette, "little hard-headed Frenchwoman." An at-

[1] Popular expressions.

tentive eye will discern there delicate figurines, such as the excellent portrait of Joseph of Arimathea; and in this verbal flux it will retain and isolate striking discoveries: a life of Jesus framed by the supreme mystery, eternal damnation; the tragic imagination of a human God, "father among fathers" who cannot bury his son, who is wonderstruck at the gratuitousness of hope, who remains "confounded at having been so much loved"; the unforgettable commentary on the parable of the lost sheep, symbolical of hope so far as to have made it penetrate the very heart of the Divinity. Since Browning's *Saul* no poet had revived this sacred thrill.

"It is better to go directly to God than to his saints," said Péguy. Anyone who would really like to know what a poet he was, in spite of so many imperfections, should read, in the *Tapisserie de Notre-Dame*, that *Présentation de la Beauce à Notre-Dame de Chartres* which dominates his work, just as the long pilgrimage which lives again in these robust quatrains dominated his life. The man has completely defined himself here, as peasant:

Nous sommes nés au bord de votre plate Beauce
Et nous avons connu dès nos plus jeunes ans
Le portail de la ferme et les durs paysans
Et l'enclos dans le bourg et la bêche et la fosse;

as satirist and polemist:

Nous arrivons vers vous du lointain Parisis.
Nous avons pour trois jours quitté notre boutique
Et l'archéologie avec la sémantique,
Et la maigre Sorbonne et ses pauvres petits;

as rudely fraternal to despair:

Nous venons vous prier pour ce pauvre garçon
Qui mourut comme un sot au cours de cette année;

as Catholic without the sacraments:

Voici le firmament, le reste est procédure;

as profoundly mystical however:

Quand nous aurons quitté ce sac et cette corde,
Quand nous aurons tremblé nos derniers tremblements,
Quand nous aurons râlé nos derniers râlements,
Veuillez vous rappeler votre miséricorde;

and capable of translating in his lyricism the beauty of the most precious sanctuary of Christendom:

Un homme de chez nous, de la glèbe féconde
A fait jaillir ici d'un seul enlèvement

Et d'une seule source et d'un seul portement
Vers votre assomption la flèche unique au monde . . .
C'est la pierre sans tache et la pierre sans faute,
La plus haute oraison qu'on ait jamais portée,
La plus droite raison qu'on ait jamais jetée,
Et vers un ciel sans bord la ligne la plus haute.

Péguy has recovered this plenitude of sense and of sound in certain pages of the *Note sur M. Bergson*, full of ingenious observations on "the stiff reason and the supple reason," on the Cartesian reality, an "invested city," on the "anticipatory panics" of human thought. There, this heavy form of an army on the march with all its auxiliaries permitted him to say things no other perhaps would have been able to express with so much force: "We must renounce this idea that passion is troubled (or obscure) and that reason is clear, that passion is confused and that reason is distinct. We all know passions which are as clear as fountains and reasons on the contrary which always run after the encumbrances of their baggage-trains. It cannot even be said that passion is rich and that reason and wisdom are poor, for there are passions which are flat like billiard-tables and there are wisdoms and reasons which are as full and ripe and heavy as grapes."

Péguy died before he had formed his "party of men of forty." He lacked time to erect his morality into a "civics." He never knew the meditation whence spring the great works which impose themselves upon history. In 1909, in the most moving of his *Cahiers*, addressed *A nos amis, à nos abonnés*, he referred to the ironical fatality which, in the presence of an intellectual history, concerned with precise results only, persecuted the Bergsonians who had spent their strength in a daily struggle the traces of which would quickly be lost: "We have thrown our entire destiny into it; but without any historical result . . . but the mechanism was small . . . We have been big in reality . . . We have not been so in the recording, in the recording-apparatus. In history . . . We shall never reach the audience." Now Intelligence—that intelligence which will have profited by the Bergsonian criticisms to embrace life more supply—will be able, even when it has become historian, to greet all those animated by a high passion for truth. As if anticipating an early death, Péguy, from 1910 to 1914, heaped volumes upon volumes. He wanted to create, to enter history violently. In spite of this obstinate effort, he fell before he had been able to pride himself upon an authentic masterpiece. He does not present himself nevertheless with empty hands, and it would be supremely unjust if he did not "reach the audience."

CHAPTER VIII

CONTEMPORARY POETRY

THE difficulty, for one who undertakes the study of contemporary French poetry in a sympathetic spirit, is to classify these writers. The too great proximity risks making us exaggerate their resemblances or their differences. In an article entitled "*Petit tableau des écoles poétiques*" (1913), Duhamel commented upon Moréas' death-bed declaration that schools do not exist. He advised forgetting these artificial groups, remembering only that there have been men—an excellent point of view for a creator but difficult for criticism to maintain if it is really to inform the reader. The obstacle to every excessively minute classification is that poetry, for the past twenty years, has been at once less anarchical in its tendencies and less organized in its schools than certain declarations would lead us to suppose. In a general way it can however be admitted that we shall not blunt the impression of ardent life which an analysis of contemporary production should leave, if we distinguish between the poets who desire especially to continue a tradition of our literary history and those who, even while they lean on their predecessors, proclaim their wish to innovate. It is permitted to hope that a table presenting the poets according to the affinities revealed by their works, much more than by the titles of the reviews in which they are brought together by accident, will have some chance of being complete without becoming arbitrary. It will be varied by the very fact that the traditionalists will be attached to their origins and the innovators situated according to the degree of their originality. Perhaps it will be perceived that the demarcations are less rigorous than would have been supposed in undertaking the description of a period in which all the great influences of the literary past are active; in which poetry essays to transpose to its use the most recent discoveries of the other arts, of science, even of industry; in which classical renaissance and search for new paths have not ended in a sterile chaos, since already the works of Claudel, Romains and Valéry stand forth, opposed and powerful; and one will meditate, in conclusion, the example of this last integrating Mallarmé and Malherbe, just as the master of all contemporary poetry, Charles Baudelaire, fused Romanticism with Classicism in this conclusion:

Loin des peuples vivants, errantes, condamnées,
A travers les déserts courez comme des loups;
Faites votre destin, âmes désordonnées,
Et fuyez l'infini que vous portez en vous!

1. ROMANTICS AND SYMBOLISTS

"The magnificent lyrical outburst which has been called Symbolism, is still alive . . ." Thus spoke Jean Royère in April, 1920, in an address to Paul Fort. Symbolism still lives since Verharen was to the end surrounded with an equal respect by all the schools, since Viélé-Griffin and Kahn have kept their admirers, since Jammes has remained Jammes, since Henri de Régnier has reconciled Symbolism with the Academy, even during the war with academicism, avenging himself for this "hardening" with a series of artistic and libertine novels.

Symbolism, however, does not live in this sense only that it outlives itself, or even because a number of poets in rebellion against its doctrine experience, consciously or unconsciously, the influence of Rimbaud and of Mallarmé. Symbolism is an active force in *La Phalange* and in Jean Royère. That poet, in the preface to *Eurythmies*, declared himself partisan of "a poetry which constrains the reader to as much initiative as the writer." He claimed to descend from Mallarmé and it is surely a soft Mallarméan echo that we find in these verses:

Sous l'yeuse, où se traine un jour décoloré,
Cherche, silencieux, quelque rive hagarde:
Là brise au roc poli qu'un doigt fantôme garde
Le reflet pâlissant du ciel transfiguré.

"Continuer of Symbolism" is also the title which suits Léon Deubel, the poet of *Ailleurs* and of *Le Chant des Routes et des Déroutes*. He has not surpassed his models, Baudelaire, Laforgue, Verlaine, Samain and Mallarmé, and we know he was never satisfied with what he had written. His verses (collected by Pergaud in *Régner*), too often bear witness to that factitious attitude he has described:

Le jour est fané comme une tenture,
Et je prie dans l'ombre un dieu d'élection
De laisser venir à moi l'impression,
Car je ne suis plus que littérature.

In *Le Tombeau du Poète* and *Stances au Poète*, on the contrary, is heard a firm voice which promised to express new truths; but Deubel killed himself at the age of thirty-four.

It is neither by the thousands of doggerel verses in the trilogy of *Antonia* or *Poésies* nor by the insipid rhapsodies composing *Les Lauriers sont coupés* that Edouard Dujardin helps Symbolism to survive; but he has written a study *De Mallarmé au prophète Ezéchiel* and his adventurous career as editor of reviews (*La Revue indépendante, La Revue des Idées, Les Cahiers idéalistes*) deserves a little of the interest which his work seeks in vain to excite.

Théo Varlet was a Symbolist by certain of his masters. A man of the "Christian North" and remembering Laforgue, he slaked his "Psyché-Bovary" with irony: but already, in those sombre countries of which he drew violent pictures, he envied Rimbaud's flight, he aspired to devote himself, body, heart and brain, "to the great pagan morning." He thus rejoins Romanticism—a Romanticism highly colored, magnified by that assimilation of all the scientific discoveries he utilizes in the planetary novels, *Les Titans du ciel and L'Agonie de la Terre*, a grandiose epic of the Martians embarking for the conquest of the sun.

Fagus, whose complete work will form a whole under the general title *Stat Crux dum volvitur orbis*, has recently touched the larger public with the *Danse macabre*, a poem composed, he says, like all his other works, "with the idea of a musical gloss at the back of my head." The victim of this *danse macabre* is human love the legendary heroes and heroines and the poets of which pass by, swept along in a movement of rutilant energy.

Paul Fort's *Ballades françaises* were at once favourably received by those who guide opinion. Gourmont greeted him as the "most curious figure of the second Symbolist generation." Independent critics and official critics, so often opposed, have always concurred in affirming that he had not obtained the reputation he deserved. Neither the founding of the *Théâtre d'Art*, nor his rôle in *Vers et Prose*, nor the title of Prince of Poets borne by him since 1912, has been able to win him all the readers he was entitled to. The blame has been attributed to his style which is, indeed, as Pierre Louys defined it, "a new style." Perfectly regular stanzas have been extracted from the prose where he places them:

L'herbe de la prairie où glissait l'or de l'air
Soulevait des vapeurs et grisait mon émoi;
La luzerne et le thym, par flots lissant la terre,
Venaient, flots de senteur, s'éperdre jusqu'à moi

(*Les Bœufs.*)

Some annoyance is, in fact, experienced in transcribing this admirable classical stanza in the form the poet has given it: "*Oui, le ciel a frappé deux fois le même lys du même éclair fidèle! J'irais cueillir, je veux aider Amaryllis à cueillir l'asphodèle.*" The sacrifice is the more painful that Paul Fort's verse is the verse of a very supple Symbolist, that he reconciles Romantic eloquence with Gallic good sense and that this poet knows how to compose a stanza with the art of the finest craftsman of the Pléiade.

We must however bow before the motives he has given as early as 1898, in the preface to *Le Roman de Louis XI:* "As for the form, I have attempted to indicate the superiority of rhythm over the artifice of prosody. In so many words, I have sought a style capable of passing, at the will of the emotions, from prose to poetry and from poetry to prose, rhythmical prose furnishing the transition. The verse follows the natural elisions of the language. It presents itself as prose, every difficulty of elision disappearing in this form. Prose, rhythmical prose, verse, no longer form but a single graduated instrument." Fort's essential design is clear. He wishes, by the employment of rhythmical prose, to safeguard the unity of his thought and those constant passages from one register to another which enchant his reader. If our hesitations are not entirely unjustified (for "every difficulty of elision" does not disappear as quickly as he declares, and his elisions have provoked learned controversies), he is none the less right on the whole and Gourmont's conclusion remains just: "Paul Fort's talent is a manner of feeling as much as a manner of speaking."

Some of Paul Fort's friends have congratulated him on not existing, on being merely a mythical person, a sort of Homer in whom many rhapsodists have collaborated—an ingenious way of stressing his prodigious mobility. How he must have smiled at this praise in his consciousness of a vigorous personality manifesting itself in failure as well as in success. For he is not unaware that the Symbolist *Répons de l'Aube et de la Nuit* or *Les Voiles de mon navire* do not represent his best and that the Henry III of his *Vision romantique* is rather commonplacely melodramatic. Not that he is incapable of animating human characters. He has made the heroes of chivalry and the magician Merlin live again in the forest of Brocéliande. He has evoked an unforgettable Louis XI: "Curious man . . . cunning . . . my sweet little Louis XI . . . Dear chestnut-merchant, how well you succeeded in drawing the Burgundian chestnuts out of the fire!" His taste for popular imagery, which had led him to Jeanne d'Arc, served him during the war to glorify Joffre and to inveigh against von Platten-

berg. In *La Guirlande au gentil William*, he has succeeded in making the Shakespeare of *Midsummer Night's Dream* speak without being ridiculous—the Shakespeare whom he resembles through so many comic inventions the best of which is *Coxcomb ou l'Homme tout nu tombé du Paradis*. In telling this story in which God swears: "*Nom de Moi*," in which Coxcomb, who has stolen the seven souls of "Messires Socrates, Hamlet and Triboulet, Galileo, Confucius, Cæsar and Mohammed," lands, at the end of his celestial adventures, in Normandy, where two gendarmes arrest him, Paul Fort has truly "flown on the wing of Fantasy." One would have to be ill-disposed indeed to refuse to follow him or to listen to him relate the *La Piteuse Bataille de Montlhéry* or *La Pèche miraculeuse*.

Paul Fort's dominating sentiment is love of nature. *Idylles antiques* testifies that he has been able to love its largest perspectives, peopling it with divinities who are not frigid imaginations for him; but his favourite landscapes are those of the Ile-de-France. He has sung Coucy-le-Chateau and Gonesse and La Ferté-Milon and "Senlis with its turtle-doves," as tirelessly as his friend Jammes has celebrated the Orthez country-side. He has consented to love Normandy, Touraine, Blésois and Vendômois. The centre of his tenderness is however that *Paris sentimental* where he follows Manon to the Luxembourg, to Bullier, on the Pont au Change:

Sur les jolis ponts de Paris, les quais et les ponts, garde-fou, garde-fol, sur les ponts de Paris joli, les quais et les ponts, gardez votre folie.
(*Sur le Pont au Change.*)

This love of nature has shaded his conception of love, inspiring it with its delicacies:

Tremble comme un tremble. Contre mon cœur sois un rayon qui tremble doux comme la soie.

(*Clair de lune.*)

It has also dictated the conclusion of the *Vision sentimentale*: "*Le malheur s'efface comme une ride sur l'onde*," and of that *Lien d'amour* which is one of his masterpieces:

Pourquoi renouer l'amourette? C'est-y bien la peine d'aimer? Le câble est cassé, fillette, et c'est toi qu'a trop tiré.

The assurance of joy in living nature reflected in *Montagne*, *Forêt*, *Plaine*, *Mer*, gives Paul Fort a philosophy:

"I should like to caress Nature with my fingers, like a beautiful instrument responding to my dream," he writes in *Les Hymnes de Feu*.

"One must not believe in death," he had said in *La Berceuse pour les agonisants*. He repeats it in *La Vision cosmique*. The poet flowers again like Nature and opposes to it an equal force of creation. His tendency to mocking irony might well induce him to entitle a volume *Chansons pour me consoler d'être heureux*. That should not mask for us the serene gravity of the affirmation which dominates *L'Aventure éternelle:*

Poète je le suis. Uniquement poète. Autrement dit rêveur, créateur conscient. Autrement dit surtout *dieu créant, dieu rêvant. Et l'un des plus crêant, rêvant de la planète.*

(*Vivre en Dieu.*)

Paul Fort is never more a "conscious creator" than at those moments when he expresses a generous thought in the form of a popular ballad, with a truly "French" accent.

2. THE TRADITIONALISTIC POETS

The return to the traditional forms had been for Moréas a literary necessity. It was, for others, the consequence of a political conviction. Jean-Marc Bernard posed as the type of partisan poet. He published *Sub tegmine Fagi* and *Pages politiques des poètes français*, in which this disciple of Maurras revealed above all the poverty of the royalist inspiration in our classics. In his collection of *Amours, Bergeries et Jeux* parody held a large place. A rather obvious quatrain placed *Sub tegmine Fagi* under the protection of Fagus, after a preface ("Those who saw everything with displeasure deem time has probably been wasted. No. Stéphane Mallarmé") which was by far the wittiest page in the book—very superior certainly to the cold mockery of the Symbolist exclamations and a colourless translation of the quatrains of Omar Khayyam. Henri Clouard congratulated J.-M. Bernard on having written "poems which perhaps show merely talent but in which the echo of no bad master is heard." The best of these verses are indeed merely faithful pastiches of Moréas.

Paul Drouot's first volumes, *La Grappe de raisin* and *Sous le vocable du chêne* were very promising. To translate the melancholy brought by him from his native Ardennes, he found accents in which, as in Moréas, the fever was disciplined into images. The unfinished *Eurydice deux fois perdue*, a prose poem in which passion achieves strokes as piercing as this:

Amie, amie, je ne puis plus me taire! Je me donne à toi comme la cloche, tout entière dans chacun de ses battements, se donne au soleil qui va disparaître sous l'horizon noir . . .,

has sharpened the regrets inspired by the loss of this poet who died for France.

Jean-Louis Vaudoyer does not ignore the charms of his epoch, as shown by *Les Papiers de Cléonthe* in which the nonchalant fantasy, sustained through two-thirds of this novel without action abruptly gives way to a study of "crystallization on the void," whose nudity is surprising after so many artificially graceful pages. There is the same double inspiration in his poetical work. *Rayons croisés* contains a moving homage to Drouot's memory and pretty evocations of Tamar Karsavina in her various rôles. Vaudoyer's muse has the voice of a Chénier who had read Baudelaire and triumphs in noble elegiac verses.

Roger Allard, an admirer of Angellier and an impulsive critic, has, from *Le Bocage amoureux* to the *Elegies martiales*, through *L'Appartement des Jeunes Filles*, sung youth and juvenile health with the sprightliness appropriate to luxurious editions dedicated to Baudelaire, Tristan l'Hermitte et Du Bellay. The grace of lettered pastiches like the *Epigramme à une Inconstante* permits us to hope from this clever poet an original work to which the *Elégies martiales* will have been the prelude. For even the traditionalists are not chained to a unique dogma at a time when we see Alfred Droin remaining faithful to the inspiration which dedicated *La Jonque victorieuse* to Sully-Prudhomme, Lucien Dubech discreetly striving to follow the tradition of Malherbe, Alexis Crouet insinuating Anatole France's disquietude into the rhythms of Lecomte de Lisle, and Robert Maurice treating the Verhaeren of the Flemish pictures as a classic model.

Joachim Gasquet's personality, his love for all the forms of the "conquering art," had gained him unanimous sympathies and his premature death is still too recent for his work as yet to be judged objectively. This neo-Classicist will remain associated with a revival of Romantic eloquence. The *Hymnes*, attempts at Pindaric odes, impassioned commentaries on the *Marseillaise* and *Le Chant du Départ*, present a rather official lyricism. An undeniable popular power mutters in *Le Chant du Retour* and *Le Hymne au Vin*. Yet Gasquet does not always obtain, by raising his voice, the lyrical transports at which he aims. Gasquet's Provençal enthusiasm is sincere. *Il y a une volupté dans la douleur*, a stormy story of a loveless voluptuousness, contains beautiful pages of a sensual pantheism with reminiscences of Valéry and Cézanne, the two masters whom Gasquet has so nobly understood and presented. *Le Bûcher secret* proceeds from the same vein; and yet, through the grandiloquent romanticism of these evocations of Tristan and Romeo which give true passion an unjust appearance of

insincerity, are distinguished the accents of an art purified, warned, as it were, by suffering:

Il fait triste . . . Une lune inquiète s'enlace
Au cou de mes cyprès qui ne la sentent pas.
C'est encore un jour vain, un de mes jours, qui passe.
Je l'entends dans mon ombre, ô ma mort . . . Parle bas.

Among the traditionalists ranks also Louis Mercier whose noble religious poems, *Lazare le Resuscité* and *Pilate*, aim at an evangelical simplicity rather than at the Old Testament luxuriances and, rather than at lyricism, at that eloquence which flouts eloquence only when it has honestly exhausted all its resources; in which his Catholic work forms a contrast with the *Poèmes visionnaires* and the *Poèmes expiatoires* of Loys Labèque who occasionally recovers, through much verbiage, the harsh accent of Corbière.

Albert Lantoine, a poet haunted by Lust and by Death, a uniformly sumptuous prose-writer whose "enamel tongue" was praised by Huysmans, has constructed, in *L'Aveugle aux colombes*, three narratives resembling sarcophagi. To break the dreary tedium of classico-Parnassian pastiches is needed the sentiment of Charles Derennes' *Perséphone* or the ingenuity of Léon Verane and of Georges Gabory who rejoin the Fantaisists, or else the attachment to a locality of Léon Bocquet, founder of *Le Beffroi* at Lille, of Marc Lafargue and Emmanuel Delbousquet, representatives of the Toulouse group.

Among them all stands forth Pierre Camo, Baudelaire's pupil for sensuality, Régnier's for music, whose artistic sympathy extends from Ronsard to Gauguin, singing Saracen beauty, adorning Imerian beauty with French roses, always brought back to amorous youth:

Et je reviens, sur ta poitrine chaleureuse,
Poser mon front exempt de trouble et de souci,
Et retrouver, au sein du bienfaisant oubli,
Le silence et l'odeur de la mort ténébreuse.
(*Les Beaux Jours.*)

Paul Géraldy is the most celebrated of our society poets. *Toi et Moi* is the canticle of a love which trifles at times but, in moments of energy, aspires to go beyond this game. Then the lovers of *Toi et Moi* attain the level of thought and meditate:

C'est de cette erreur profonde
que maintenant nous souffrons.
On ne fait pas tenir le monde
derrière un front.

As long as the balance is thus maintained between such poetry and its object, we should have bad grace to protest; but when this tittle-tattle choses one of the great love themes which the genii have placed under the protection of good taste, then indecency begins. It is painful to have to remind the author of the piece entitled *Dualisme* that this subject has been treated in the second act of *Tristan et Isolde.*

Maurice Magre has not had a success comparable to Géraldy's. He deserved it however by what Duhamel defined as "a sort of courageous contempt for art," by his persistency in singing

Le mouvement qui fait de tout corps féminin
un élan de beauté vers des nuits ténébreuses.

More skilfully, François Porché has decorated with literature the fundamentally prosaic quality of his inspiration in which the stereotyped and the softly sensual alternate. All his plays exploit this false ingenuousness. He makes an artistic virtue of his inability to equal Rostand's virtuosity. In *L'Arret sur la Marne* some traits of mannered picturesqueness still passed muster thanks to the emotion which provoked this rhetorical display. The platitude of the *Poème de la Déliverance* no longer has this excuse and the poet who, in *Nous*, wrote:

Que Paris, dans la nuit à peine commencée,
Quand les lampes partout s'allument dans l'air bleu,
Est délié, subtil et brillant de pensée!

seems to have received the whole mortal heritage of François Coppée.

3. FEMININE ROMANTICISM

Under the above heading, Charles Maurras grouped, in 1903, "four gentle woman-headed monsters." If to-day he enlarged this quartette into a septette, he would doubtless show some indulgence for the wise Minerva of Mlle. Charasson whom Marcel Boulenger has slandered by comparing her *Attente* to the *Chansons de Bilitis. Cœur Magnifique*, by Mme. Jane Catulle-Mendès, purely bookish in inspiration, would find no grace in his eyes, but he would bow before the pathetic sincerity of the *Prière sur l'Enfant mort.* As for *Heures d'Hiver*, by Mme. Bournat-Provins and her *Livre pour Toi*, prose poems dedicated to Sylvius "in memory of our hours of bliss," in which feminine love sings the praises of the masculine body, it does not take a Maurras to recognize in them above all the manifestation of a rich temperament, and her *Poèmes troubles* are, on the whole, fairly clear.

They recall, at times, though in a simplified form, the romanticism

of Renée Vivien. The latter delighted in an atmosphere of exoticism and magic:

Mon cœur est las enfin des mauvais amours,
Des songes de mes nuits et des maux de mes jours.
Mon cœur est vieux autant qu'un très ancien grimoire
Et, désespérément, j'appelle l'Heure Noire.

In this Baudelairian palace, Renée Vivien is at ease. As soon as she ventures without, all inspiration deserts her.

"I talk bizarre as others talk French." When she lent these words to Mme. Delarue-Mardrus, Maurras stressed the technical weaknesses which obscure her sincerest inspiration. This uncertainty in the expression mars a little the pictures of her beloved Normandy. It also slackens the eloquent movements of *La Figure de Proue.* Lucie Delarue-Mardrus is more successful in the fine verse than in the complete stanza:

Tout le Printemps tiendra dans une violette . . .
Ah! je ne guérirai jamais de mon pays! . . .

In addition to love of nature, she has celebrated human love, sometimes in intimate poems, sometimes in romantic amplifications like *Chant de la Passion;* and occasionally, apropos of a fleeting sensation, she has, speaking complacently of herself, associated humanity with her revery:

Le beau temps délicat chauffe ma gorge nue
Où repose ma voix, douce comme un pigeon.
Je sens avec mon cœur, au fond de l'étendue,
Le pauvre cœur humain claquer comme un bourgeon.

Mme. de Noailles has been nicknamed the "Garden Muse" and compared to Francis Jammes. She has spoken many times of her love of nature and, in *Le Cœur innombrable,* she did not fear to invite ridicule by identifying herself with natural things:

Et ce sera très bon et très juste de croire
Que mes yeux ondoyants sont à ce lin pareils,
Et que mon cœur, ardent et lourd, est cette poire
Qui mûrit doucement sa pelure au soleil . . .

but before this magnificent declaration in *L'Ombre des Jours:*

Nature au cœur profond sur qui les cieux reposent,
Nul n'aura comme moi si chaudement aimé

La lumière des jours et la douceur des choses,
L'eau luisante et la terre où la vie a germé . . .

who would dream of smiling?

All Anna de Noailles' poetry is a music of wide intervals. It would be as useless to deplore the absence in it of average qualities she has never sought as it would be easy to find in her work influences, from Villon to the Symbolists. These two lines:

Le soir tombait, un soir si penchant et si triste . . .
L'harmonieuse paix des germinations . . .

prove she has forgotten neither her Verlaine nor her Hugo. To speak of her romanticism is useful only if the word is meant to define, not to censure, the eloquence of the prayer facing the sun:

Et pourtant, je le sens, vive et lasse de pleurs,
J'ai vécu si profonde et si haute en douleurs,
J'ai, dans les soirs pensifs, sous les blanches étoiles,
Des bords de mon esprit écarté tant de voiles,
J'ai fait de mes deux bras, dans l'aube et dans le soir,
Des gestes d'un si vif et si doux désespoir,
Que dans l'éther divin où monte toute image
Mes désirs se feront un éternel passage . . .
(*Les Eblouissements.*)

Shall we discuss this attitude of a priestess of Life when it gives us such flights of sincere ardour?

Her novels testify to the omnipotence of sensation. She asserts it in *La Nouvelle Espérance:* "Sabine pictured pleasure and death in an acute and simple fashion, by her taste for warmth and by her fear of shivering . . . There is no future, there is only the present, always the present . . . There is but one pleasure, that which hurts . . . Heroism is the sharpest sensuality . . . " *Le Visage émerveillé* accentuates this artless anarchy: "Conscience is a sadness experienced after something which one has just done and which one would do again." She lives spontaneously in the voluptuous and poetic paganism evoked by *La Domination:* "All poets—and, my dear Pan, there are many poets—await you in the gardens. Do not believe them when they think themselves mystics and converted to Judaism. If they say their soul thirsts for mystery, it is because they seek you and have not found you." The heart, as well as reasoning, can lead to the conviction of the universal flux: "He well knew that Venice lies, that everything lies, that there is no happiness, merely a swift flight of time and of memories which fade." At times she hopes in love, but at bottom she is not ignorant that

L'Amour n'est ni joyeux ni tendre

and will never completely satisfy her eternal awaiting. "The contour of women's souls is like their look, completely girt around with languor and desire."

Since nothing on earth seemed to her to equal in reality the flame of this desire, Mme. Noailles has at least been ambitious to stamp an unforgettable image of it upon the living and upon those yet to come. She has boldly raised the cry of sensuality even in those chimerical regions where no precision breaks it and where it is repeated by ample echoes. Let us not separate what she has so passionately joined together and let us grant *L'Image* the glory of being, not only a very fine poem, but at the same time the victory won over perfidious time by "a small and clear" woman who charges the dying faun with her most precious message to the "pensive dead";

Tu leur diras que je m'endors,
Mes bras nus pliés sous ma tête,
Que ma chair est comme de l'or
Autour des veines violettes . . .
Et dis-leur que dans les soirs lourds,
Couchée au bord frais des fontaines,
J'eus le désir de leurs amours
Et j'ai pressé leurs ombres vaines
(*Le Cœur innombrable.*)

For some time it was the fashion among the neo-classics to quote these two lines by Gérard d'Houville:

Le rameur qui m'a pris l'obole du passage
Et qui jamais ne parle aux ombres qu'il conduit,

in order to praise this poetess who did not regard free verse with the same favour as her husband, Henri de Régnier, and whose most supple stanza kept a classic mien. However the construction of a poem such as *Consolation* or the beginning of *L'Offrande funéraire* seems to reveal a cultural kinship between the two arts. This comparison defines the originality of Gérard d'Houville, made up of feminine shadings like the delicate notations of *Le temps d'aimer* or these impressions of nature less haughtily composed than dreamily told over by memory:

Le goût et la saveur succulente d'un fruit,
Le rayon de soleil qui me dore la joue,
Et l'heure paresseuse où le rêve se joue,
Et le petit croissant de lune dans la nuit
(*Le Regret.*)

This charm reappears in *On ne saurait penser à tout,* a comedy-proverb à la Musset in a Régnier-like Italy, where this feminine grace and faith in the power of love renew the canvas of pure artistic fancy. She, too, has kept in her work a charm of confidence. It is piquant, in *Tant pis pour toi,* to hear Heredia's daughter assert that "when, here and there, a man has genius—genius, that other form of love—well! this genius comes to him from his mother." It is touching that her "multiple regret" should mingle the vision of a precise being with landscape of a burning climate:

Et vous, naïf orgueil de mon jeune visage,
Et vous, souple fraicheur de mes bras ronds et nus,
Et vous, lontain pays, charmes ressouvenus
Du départ, du retour et du changeant voyage!

(*Le Regret.*)

4. THE INTIMISTS

Anyone who wanted, before knowing the new theories of our epoch, to taste its complex sensibility, would find it indispensable to collect, on one of his bookshelves, a few poets who are in other respects very different but who, arbitrarily brought together, would form an excellent preparation for the study of the works which have pretended to renew this sensibility. One of the merits of the Intimists is, indeed, to inform us as to the ambient influences which they reflect and diversify.

René Salomé's camaieu poems bear witness to the survival of Symbolism as Jammes and Samain understand it. The eloquent fascination of Romanticism has touched Léo Larguier, inspiring him, in addition to an ambitious *Jacques* in the tradition of *Jocelyn,* with some delicate invocations such as the eighteenth-century *Rêverie* justly dedicated to Mme. de Noailles.

It was also to Mme. de Noailles that Emile Despax dedicated one of the most beautiful pieces in *La Maison des Glycines;* but the romanticism of this invocation is not his habitual tone. He has paid noble homage to Jammes. Memories of Samain and of Rodenbach might be noted in his work. He possessed the foremost quality of the Intimist poet, passivity:

Comme un étang, comme un miroir, mon âme est lisse.
Le grand jour n'y vit pas, n'y meurt pas; il y glisse.
Comme un étang, comme un miroir qui se complait
A ne jouer que de reflets. Et ces reflets
En sont la caressante et paresseuse vie . . .

(*Le Rêve.*)

François-Paul Alibert's poetry testifies to a great mastery of various techniques. Heir of Symbolism, he can handle free verse and, in hours of happiness, recaptures something of Mallarmé's luminous density; but, beyond *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, Alibert wishes to join Virgil and has indicated his device:

J'aime ce dur laurier qui pousse vers la gloire
Hérissé de sa feuille étincelante et noire
Une tête hautaine et l'orgueil d'être seul.
(*Le Buisson ardent.*)

This classicism where there remain traces of Vigny and Leconte de Lisle seems at moments a trifle artificially emotional. For this reason preference will be given to the passages where the poet unbends a little, the ardent *Ode érotique* which goes far beyond the fashionable "*Chénierisme*," the delicate impressionistic touches of *L'Hôtesse inconnue:*

Sous les branches où perce une humide sueur,
Des pruniers aux fruits bleus vernissés de fraicheur . . .

and the reveries of the *Elégies romaines* in which the verse, fluid and full, bears easily the wealth of a double tradition:

Car l'amour le meilleur est cet amour furtif
Qui ne traîne apres lui qu'une image effacée,
Et de qui l'apparence entre nos doigts pressée
Ne laisse pour seul charme et pour tout souvenir
Que les traits renaissants d'un immortel désir,
Et sa jeune chaleur à nos lèvres brûlante.

By verses of such a quality Alibert marks a progress in the classical renaissance from Moréas to Valéry.

Tristan Klingsor has by no means rejected Symbolism and, with a more refined art, continues the tradition of Laforgue; but here there is no stammering. This fancy is sure of itself. It knows its limits. It delights in the exotic and leads us to Bohemia:

Les Bohémiens qui ont des fleurs de neige
Dans leur barbe noire, ce soir, sont passés . . .
(*Poèmes de Bohême;*)

or else to China:

Contempler à loisir des paysages peints
Sur des étoffes en des cadres de sapin
Avec un personnage au milieu d'un verger.
(*Shéhérazade, Asie.*)

A purely literary exoticism, moreover. Gluck's music, a recollection of Jammes, reading Ronsard serve quite as well to start this subtle, mandarin-like imagination.

"Then, when this quality of gentleness had insinuated itself, little by little, as a woman suggests a specious excuse, the Silurian seas ceased to waltz, spread out, and began their sombre gestation." In this sentence from *Vieux Monde* a practised ear will recognize, between the memories of Rimbaud and Laforgue, the personal note of Léon-Paul Fargue. It was already discernible in *Tancrède*, a veiled confession completely impregnated with Symbolism and Impressionism in incisive traits which recall La Bruyère and are akin to certain phrases of *Paludes*. Analysis and fancy are not at variance in Fargue. "His passivity is evident," remarks Duhamel who quotes this fragment from *Poèmes:* "One evening, I had found—it seems to me I had found—a thing to make me happy. I thought of it in a dark, greasy street, with its infinite flight of lamp-posts, and like a great burst of silent, sombre laughter." Trancrède must inflict some childish jokes upon us before revealing his emotion:

Comme la vie fait souffrir,
Sans reproche, sans mot dire,
Pour un rien, pour le plaisir.

Again he will have to brand the confidences of *Tremblantes* with this ironical subtitle: "Seven variants made for marking time or calming the nerves."

His emotion, ever ready to break through, distinguishes him from his friends, the Fantasists, whom he has evoked in the *Conversation* with Valéry Larbaud. He has let his grief speak fully, without constraint, in *Æternæ Memoriæ Patris;* but his personal domain is the visionary penumbra in which he enjoys life better than in the hard reality: "The Heroes have only their dull joys of battle and of the theatre . . . But we! So many landscapes swelling with music exchange it with that thought by our soul." There he can hope to retire "with a friend who knows everything about me, who reproaches me with everything—and who forgives me." Through his musical half-dream pass memories of towns and of loves, joys of which his nostalgia exasperates the fragility, clear little pictures imbued with melancholy: "And I think of someone whom I love and who is so little to be so far, perhaps, beyond dark countries, beyond deep waters. And his look is invisible to me." He lives there eternally awaiting "the idyll," but without illusion: "What then is all our tenderness? Nothing but a little wave which nibbles at the shore and then returns

to the open sea." He is always himself, detached, solitary: "What you are about to love escapes immediately, swiftly, towards the shadows . . . but what you do love ends invariably by deciding to leave you . . . One is alone . . . One is always alone . . . The aim of everything is solitude."

In this musical solitude which is not without charm, Fargue writes his poems which are Etudes à la Chopin, studies in rhythms and in sensibility; and it is the privilege of this nervous sensibility, so curious concerning every poetic shading, to give these rhythms, now a firmness which presages Romains, now the nonchalance of a melancholy, smiling *lied:*

Mon cœur frappe à la porte
Dans l'ombre . . .
J'aime trop pour le dire . . .
Il passe dans mon verre,
Comme des ailes claires,
Ses gestes, son sourire . . .

(*Pour la Musique.*)

5. THE FANTASISTS

The invasion of poetry by fantasy is one of the characteristic traits of our time. Not that other epochs have lacked it; but, even allowing for the exaggeration required by timeliness, none seems to have demanded so urgently to be diverted, to have aroused so many independent fantasists, and paradoxically grouped the fantasists in schools.

Here again we shall find traditionalists. Henry Spiess' humour in *Rimes d'Audience* has the wisdom which characterizes his lyricism in *Le Silence des heures.* Franc Nohain's drolleries bring journalism to a kind of poetry. Vincent Muselli does not repudiate his ancestors, the libertine poets. Raoul Ponchon has a whole line of predecessors and his *Muse au cabaret* cultivates his chosen domain with a robust spirit and a pleasant monotony:

Que si j'ose élever la voix
Dans le tumulte de la Vie
Ce n'est que pour
Célébrer le Vin et l'Amour
Et l'amour de ma mie
O gué!
Encore suis-je bien fatigué

(*Chanson d'Automne.*)

Tristan Derème would not forgive us for ranking him among the elegiac poets. He has sung Montmartre and Bohemia, multiplying the Banvillian capers:

Tes bras ont une courbe adorable et malgré que
Ton cœur n'ait que dédain pour la grammaire grecque. . . .

However the theme of *Poème de la pipe et de l'escargot* is the sad lot of the poet in contemporary life. Its apparent prosiness is justified because

L'ombre émouvante est dans les choses minuscules,

and the *Poème des Chimères étranglées* (eloquent title!) confesses a discontentment which might renew this trifling:

Un beau regard, s'il te sourit,
Tu le railles, mais tu regrettes
Ces printemps morts où ton esprit
Etait plein d'étoiles secrètes.

Parodists have multiplied, but their charm is temporal. Rereading *La Négresse blonde*, by Georges Fourest, one is struck most of all by the coarseness of the devices employed. Does a similar decreptitude threaten the *A la manière de . . .* by Paul Reboux and Charles Muller? It would seem as if the fine literary criticism concealed in these pastiches should preserve them from it. Jean Pellerin had also published a collection of pastiches, *Le Copiste indiscret*, which testifies to the flexibility of his fancy. The lively ten-line stanzas of *La Romance du Retour* poked agreeable fun at the bric-à-brac which was the rage. Pellerin ingeniously described the modern setting, the motors, the bars, cudgelling bourgeois and snobs, sketching pretty pictures in passing:

Mais Peter, marchand de son ombre,
N'ose offrir le chèque maudit
Où le diable a mis son paraphe.
Cependant, la dactylographe
L'agrafe d'un œil enhardi . . .

Death took Jean Pellerin from us prematurely; but literary history will remember a beginner's work sure to create imitators.

It would be still more unjust if a host of counterfeiters caused the originality of Henry Levet, who died at thirty-two, to be forgotten. For, in the thin volume the publication of which was due to the piety of faithful friends, if *Le Drame de l'Allée* and *Le Pavillon* are merely the essays of a young man seeking his way between imitation and parody-

ing of the Symbolist masters, the ten *Cartes postales* are the work of a precursor.

Novel-readers who know nothing of Francis Carco but *Jésus la Caille*, the scenes of Montmartre and of Belleville, the conversations in savoury slang, the picturesque, solidly constructed play *L'Equipe*, will be somewhat surprised, on opening his *Petits Airs*, to happen upon this *Madrigal:*

Vous n'aimez pas qui vous aime
Ni qui vous saurait aimer
Et ne donnez de vous-même
Que ce que vous voulez donner.

Soon, however, they will recognize, in a setting heightened by memories of Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec, their familiar heroes:

La musique des tziganes
Fait rêver d'amour,
Mais Julot, dit Sarbacane,
Arrive à son tour . . .

Carco was in fact one of the Fantasists who rose up against "the disorder of the pseudo-Romantics and the rubbish of Symbolism," as he says in his preface to Jean Pellerin's *Le Bouquet inutile.* He should then have inscribed himself among the subjective writers. The amiable confidences of *Maman Petitdoigt*, in which childhood memories and evocations of *tendres canailles* mingle, have a more engaging ease than the violence of *Les Innocents;* but the same milieus where Salmon seeks to confront his doubt with their certitudes Carco has traversed as an observer disinterested enough to become again at once an objective story-teller. The brief tales in *Au Coin des rues* are so many proofs of this. The tense sobriety of *L'Homme traqué* soon brought an interesting evidence of it. Apart from a useless evocation of the idea of "redemption," Carco here maintained from one end to the other his purpose, which was to adopt none, to paint with a fine artistic neutrality the unfolding of the inner drama arising from a criminal act, without permitting anything to warp this rigorous analysis.

After the success of *L'Homme traqué*, Carco had the courage to turn to another subject entirely different. *Rien qu'une femme* is the confession of a love first happy, then crossed, renewed again, finally broken, the narrative of a double downfall, carnal and spiritual. Carco has not idealized his heroes (a hotel maid who debauches the son of her mistress), but he effaces himself entirely behind the narrator. The unity of expression equals the unity of atmosphere. This is as

simple as *Adolphe*. The author has also revived the long flexible sentence of the master psychologists: "It was these relics which still linked us to each other, and they had charms so powerful that they deceived me as to the strength lent them and, above all, as to their sort of abject and tormented grandeur." Much should be expected of the young novelist capable, without falling into academicism, of so happy a renewal.

Since Paul-Jean Toulet's death, in September 1920, his reputation has not ceased growing. Until then it had remained restricted to literary circles where it provoked imitations, including Jean Pellerin's *La Jeune Fille aux pinceaux*. For the public Toulet remained the chronicler of *La Vie parisienne*. Certain of his books maintained this misunderstanding. In spite of some exquisite *mots*, such as this post-script: "Do not look for any obscenities in my letter: there are some," *Les Tendres Ménages* has much aged. One must make haste to read *Béhanzigue* and relish the whipped cream of *Mon amie Nane* before their slang is out of date. This will lead moreover to the discovery of another Toulet, a poet beneath the fantasist, the author of *L'Etrange Royaume* who, in *Béhanzique*, scans two lines of prose in three *alexandrins*. ("*Soit dit sans offenser à M. Debussy, qui sut tirer du Faune une chanson divine, et de sa vaine grappe, un prestige précis*"); who, in *La Princesse de Colchide*, continues *Les Moralités légendaires* with less philosophic verbiage and more drollery, strewing the story of Jason and Medea with counter-rhymes, reproducing the dapper tone of Baudelaire the dandy of the *Causeries*.

If Toulet had been merely a prose-writer, he would count admirers to consider him a kind of Henri Beyle who had never quite become Stendhal. Stories would be told about his noctambulism. Echoes of "his speech, alternately incisive and obscure," would be sought in his heroes, Béhanzigu and du Paur," full at once of irritability, of nonchalance and of easy grace." The *mots* he lent them would be restored to him: "Wise men cast their life into pleasure as Tiepolo his silver into the Adriatic: after having spread nets beneath the windows." In his first novel, *M. du Paur, homme public*, La Rochefoucauld's influence mingles with that of Stendhal from whom he has combined amusing epistolary centos. Toulet shares Stendhal's contempt for masculine heaviness. He has the proper warm admiration for feminine beauty. On this point the disciple's conviction yields in no respect to his master's; but he has profited by Beyle's experiments. He presents Nane and Lætitia in an atmosphere of irony and of sensuality which gives *Ombres chinoises* its bittersweet charm.

Exoticism holds an important place in his work. His parents had

left the island of Mauritius for him to be born in France, but his youth was passed on "the flowery savannah":

Douce aux ramiers, douce aux amants,
Toi de qui la ramure
Nous charmait d'ombre et de murmures,
Et de roucoulements

(*Contrerimes.*)

He never forgot "the light shade of the *filaos.*" The Spain of *Le Mariage de Don Quichotte*, London, Algiers, the Far East, which he visited, were sources of inspiration for him. At the same time the Béarnais of *La Jeune Fille verte* was passionately French. Patriotism entered into his pride as a "grammarian." The preface to *M. du Paur*, a certain letter from Sylvère to the Guardian Angel or Mme. des Cypres' diary bear witness to this refined stylist's virtuosity.

All these qualities are united in the *Contrerimes.* This volume owes its title to the stanza employed by Toulet in the majority of his pieces (type 8a 6b 8b 6a). Without denying the charm of the ten-line stanzas and of the couplets he adds to them, one will recognize in these epigrams the most ephemeral part of the collection; but in the *contrerimes* properly speaking not a fault will be found. Toulet polished them amorously. They show a perfect craftsmanship. His whole existence lives in them again.[1]

6. FROM THE CUBISTS TO THE DADAISTS

The tardy fame of a Toulet is explained in part by the habit taken by the "Independents" of uniting in schools and under banners covering painters and musicians as well as writers. It would be easy to demonstrate that the epithet "Cubist" is very inadequate for the art of Picasso. All the more then is it entirely insufficient to characterize the group of the Rue Ravignan—Max Jacob, Apollinaire and Salmon; but an impropriety more or less not making much difference in critical language, it is infinitely probable that the poet-designer and the two poet-critics of *Les Peintres cubistes* and *L'Art vivant* will remain "the Cubists" in literary history.

"Before us," Jean Metzinger has written, "no painter had taken the trouble to handle the objects he painted." Applied to literature, this Cubist principle will explain such a passage from Guillaume Apollinaire:

[1] For the complete study which Toulet merits, see *La Vie de P.-J. Toulet*, by Henri Martineau.

Une famille transporte un édredon rouge comme
vous transportez votre cœur
Cet édredon et nos rêves sont aussi irréels
Quelques-uns de ces émigrants restent içi et se logent
Rue des Rosiers ou rue des Ecouffes dans des bouges
Je les ai vus souvent le soir ils prennent l'air dans la rue
Et se déplacent rarement comme les pièces aux échecs

(*Alcools.*)

And it would be unjust to deny this Cubism, concerned "with rendering sensible all the facets of an object at the same time" (Salmon) the power to construct, in the presence of a poem like:

Au tournant d'une rue je vis des matelots
Qui dansaient le cou nu au son d'un accordéon
J'ai tout donné au soleil
Tout sauf mon ombre
Les dragues, les ballots, les sirènes mi-mortes
A l'horizon brumeux s'enfonçaient les trois-mâts
Les vents ont expiré couronnés d'anémones
O Vierge signe pur du troisième mois

(*Alcools.*)

Apollinaire's Cubism is then perfectly intelligible. A comparison between *La Nuit rhénane* and *Les Fiançailles* (dedicated to Picasso) will show by what logical sequence Apollinaire passed from Impressionism to Cubism. Making legitimate allowance for the humorist, we can reject from this evolution the legend of mystification which has too long surrounded it.

Thus in theory there is nothing against a renewal of French poetry in the direction indicated by Apollinaire, that is to say by transporting into the art of words the Cubist preoccupation which André Lhote sums up as follows: "To animate the interior of plane surfaces filled with local tone by the vibration of the contour." The aim will no longer be an academic copy of nature but a deformation of reality dissociating certain of its elements ordinarily united and bringing together others habitually separated in order to totalize all their values in a single image. The preface to *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* proves that Apollinaire distinguished his "super-realism" from "deception." "When man wanted to imitate walking, he created the wheel which does not resemble a leg. He thus created super-realistically, without knowing it." Why then did not Apollinaire fulfil his vast design more successfully? Why does his work give the impression of success in a few brief poems only?

We must answer frankly: because Apollinaire's virtuosity is per-

fectly incapable of a great creative effort. As soon as he undertakes to raise the tone in *Vendémiaire* or *Le Mariage d'André Salmon*, he reveals a terrible poverty of poetic imagination. Forced to fill out his poems, he has recourse to a motley cosmopolitanism, sometimes funny (*La Synagogue*), usually tiresome and reeking of the "junk shop" of which Duhamel speaks in his connection. This bric-à-brac litters the tales in *L'Hérésiarque & Cie* where tales of Jewry and of decadent Catholicism mingle with gruesomely comic inventions which outdo Poe without causing him to be forgotten. He has been reproached with the grossness which takes from *Le Poète assassiné* the little interest a painfully sustained fantasy might leave it and which spoils even the pretty *Chanson du mal aimé*. The most serious defect of these *gauloiseries* is that they are not at all Gallic, but pedantically borrowed.

We touch here the essential point, the reproach which Duhamel has pitilessly formulated: "In fact he writes only from books." We have spoken of his poverty and how badly he dissimulated it beneath bric-à-brac, wilful obscenity and art students' jokes, the "*Soleil cou coupé*" and other pretty trifles. It remains to be stressed that all this is purely bookish and that Apollinaire's Muse, when she sets out for Montparnasse, comes from the Bibliothèque Nationale. Stripped of his prestige as a *chef d'école*, he offers us an amiable continuer of the *poètes badins:*

Je souhaite dans ma maison:
Une femme ayant sa raison,
Un chat passant parmi les livres,
Des amis en toute saison
Sans lesquels je ne peux pas vivre

(*Le Bestiaire.*)

and an alert story-teller, the amusing talker who smiles in the multiple digressions and in the last page of *La Femme assise:* "Elvire (she will always exist) is, to a high degree, what all women are who, like the Swiss *écu*, are false and do not pass current."

Would it be unjust to apply this phrase to his Cubism? If he did not betray Cubism, he has at least given a rather inexact interpretation of it. One would seek in vain to distinguish two Apollinaires, a pre-Cubist and a Cubist. His work, in spite of the changes in the methods, possesses a unity which is this bookish inspiration. Apollinaire shed his blood gloriously for France. Perhaps however the language of his adopted country remained for him a thing too acquired to permit him to advance spontaneously and without models. The

richness of his erudition hampered him. He had to fall back upon ingenious details, slip the charming song of Orkenise into the rubbish of *L'Enchanteur pourrissant*, interrupt the gossip of *Couleur du Temps* with a brief lyrical halt:

O fils ô mon fils plus blanc qu'un lys . . .

Deprived of their typographic artifice the *Calligrammes* are not more original than what we have quoted from *Alcools*. One will discern in them too the inheritor of the first Symbolism who, in *Vitam Impendere Amori*, remembered Verlaine. The best of Apollinaire is in these musical poems, literary in their inspiration, *Le Jet d'eau* or *La Chanson du mal aimé*. Here, through the rhythm and the accent, he is able to evoke the immortal presence of François Villon, adroitly mingling the charm of modern fantasy with the echoes of an ancient melancholy:

Voie lactée ô sœur lumineuse
Des blancs ruisseaux de Chanaan
Et des corps blancs des amoureuses
Nageurs morts suivrons-nous d'ahan
Ton cours vers d'autres nébuleuses.

(*Alcools.*)

To measure the laboriousness of Apollinaire's wit, it is enough to open a book by Max Jacob, *Cinématoma*, a "collection of characters" in the form of lyrical monologues, or that *Phanérogame*, "a life portrait of dilettantism during the epoch 1900–1905," with its variations on the twelve types of adultery, the nonsense of the "Chapter on the Clownish Cat" and the street-fair drolleries: "We are neither what we are nor what we are not, nor what we should like to be, nor what we believe ourselves to be, nor what we should pass for were we not what we are." It is a rich flow. About figures like "Daniel, uncloistered friar and beadle's clerk" or "the gentleman who travelled in a parlour-car for the first time," Max Jacob multiplies the memories of a cruel observation and the inventions of an unbridled fantasy.

Few books produce the impression of concrete richness presented by *La Défense de Tartufe*, "ecstasies, remorse, visions, prayers, poems and meditations of a converted Jew." Triumph of the macaronic poem. All the celebrated voices of literature are recalled in it: expressions from popular novels, bits of hymns, janitors' stories traverse the quibbles of a dialectic Jew. Beneath the banter of *L'Examen sur la Foi* is concealed a fine analysis. Here is the restrained eloquence of *L'Examen sur la Charité:* "I say I do not believe I have ever known love, because my divine transports have too closely resembled those I had for my friends: much familiarity, many exigencies and some tears

coming at the right moment to make me believe in a devotion and to make me proud of it." Then Max Jacob precipitates us into the *pot-pourri:*

Il y en a un qui gueule sur la crécelle.
Il y en a un qui dégueule dans la vaisselle.
Il y en a un des uns qui a la voix sablée.
Si vous croyez que je ne vois pas que vous vous moquez de moi, les enfants de chœur, allez!
Resurrexit homini hominum Palléas nostrum.
Et dans le tableau du fond il y a de sales bonshommes.

(*La Messe du Démoniaque.*)

Neither these buffooneries nor those of the *Laboratoire central* should hide the fact that Max Jacob is a very conscious artist: "The prose poem," he says in his *Art poétique*, "such as I have conceived it in *Le Cornet à dès* and such as it has since been imitated, differs from the fantasies of Aloysius Bertrand in this that the subject is of no importance in it, or the picturesque either. The sole preoccupation is with the poem itself, that is to say with the harmony of the words, of the images and of their mutual and constant appeal." MM. Tropgrandglaïeul, Psittacus and Haineabord are lasting puppets and all the savoury images of his Brittany will remain; but will not posterity avenge itself by taking Max Jacob at his word, by leaving concealed, beneath the clown's mask too obstinately retained in the laborious and tiresome *Roi de Béotie*, the real face of the poet who could sometimes delicately ally irony and emotion?—

J'ai retrouvé Quimper où sont nés mes premiers vingt ans
Et je n'ai pas retrouvé mes larmes.
Jadis quand j'approchais les pauvres faubourgs blancs
Je pleurais jusqu'à me voiler les arbres . . .

(*Mille regrets.*)

The first contact with André Salmon's abundant work may veil his originality under the appearance of an equal facility in poetry, the short-story and criticism. *Le Calumet, Le Livre et la Bouteille, La Negresse du Sacré-Cœur* are principally valuable as evocations of prewar *milieus* by an observer skilled in utilizing the lessons of the fantasists and of the painters. The verses of *Le Calumet* have the elegant cleverness characterizing the prose of the *Manuscrit trouvé dans un chapeau:* "One evening I insulted my best friend and, in that hostile night, picked up a passing woman. I keep her. She is sweet, she is wise, she knows a surprising lot of idiotic songs and is good at making hash. Let's toast ourselves, my heart, in this comfortable common-

place sensuality, between my hallucinated shadow and this child who collects post-cards."

Salmon, however, has never wished to resemble "those cowardly poets who fall asleep on the sill of the vision in the nonchalant search for a cadence worthy of it." The amateur of choice monsters finds, as soon as he is moved, the accents of a rude indignation:

Le recruteur était un traitre
Car on fait faire, il m'a menti,
Aux grands la guerre des petits
Pour les marchands et pour leurs prêtres . . .

(*Costal l'Indien.*)

Listen to the narrator of *Tendres Canailles:* "The intellectual proletariat is infinitely less sympathetic to me than the other. I should certainly not die for the latter, but I should, many times over, with a blithe heart, have aided in the salutary massacre of the former." The supreme attraction of this book in which the Carrefour de Buci and its *habitués,* "artists without art," are painted with a delicate precision, is invariably the drama which underlies the tale—the drama of the difference between men. The story-teller, M. Tourneur, Bébert, Ver Rongeur, Le Bellevillois and the Neapolitan mark the route which leads from extreme civilization to barbarism. To spread the fan shaded with refinement and brutality is also the aim in *L'Entrepreneur d'Illuminations,* vast fresco of a social life in which the hero of *Tendres Canailles* receives the confidences of the magistrates, in which the Zouave of *Le Calumet* who fed on extracts from the *Code militaire* turns into a renowned satyr, in which the mystical Marat becomes an assassin because he "had slept with the Goddess Reason." Salmon has always loved the cruelty of revolutionary images. Did he not write, twelve years earlier?—

Et ma jeunesse délicate
Surgit, cygne au col de carmin,
Comme un belle aristocrate,
Portant sa tête dans ses mains

(*Quatorze Juillet.*)

Publishing *Prikaz* he invited us to see in it "a first poetic essay substituting for the seasons of the old lyricism the unstable climate of universal anxiety." What the disturbance *Tendres Canailles* had introduced into the novel by renewing the attitude of the novelist *Prikaz* brings into the epic, by methods less different than amplified. The refusal to discuss the value of the Bolshevist revolution, "the acceptance of a fact on the plane of the mavellous" (which recalls the refusal

to discuss the metamorphosis of Bébert into Albert Grivaud) permits Salmon the tragic evocation of Rasputin as well as the mystical supplication:

Seigneur ayez pitié
Des hommes de la terre russe!
S'ils ont versé le sang, ils ont banni la ruse.

(*Prikaz, X.*)

By "restoring emotion to the impersonal" he has been able legitimately to throw upon this spectacle of unleashed passions and ideas wherein arise the phantoms of the usurping Czars the consolation of a great human pity.

Futurism has appeared rather inexactly as an intermediate stage between Cubism and Dadaism. When, in 1912, Marinetti formulated the principle, "to abolish in literature the apparently indissoluble fusion of the two conceptions of Woman and Beauty," to replace it by "the idea of mechanical beauty . . . to exalt love for the Machine," he did little more than codify the instinct which had inspired him, as early as 1904, with the verses of *Destruction:*

En un grand jour de flux et de reflux, force et dévaste
les grands ports d'ébène tout étranglés de roches,
dont le goulet souffle une rouge haleine,
sous des fumées géantes et droites, couronnées d'astres,
qui les piétinent superbement de leurs pas de fantômes,

(*A la Mer vengeresse.*)

Had the Futurist movement succeeded, it would perhaps have given us a new form of poetry; but it preferred to divert its effort to the invention of "noise-makers" commensurate with its dream.

Aragon, who represents politics rather than mysticism in Dada, has opposed to Rimbaud's phantom his Anicet, brother of the Lafcadio of *Les Caves.* He has none the less in *Liquidation,* published by *Littérature,* accorded eighteen out of twenty to the precursor. The best motto for Dada is this sentence from *La Saison en Enfer:* "I end by finding the disorder of my mind sacred," corrected by Valéry's affirmation: "The human mind seems to me so made as to be incapable of incoherency for itself." Or for others, adds André Breton, who denies that Dada is a pure subjectivism and whose *Mont-de-Piété* admits in *Rieuse* or *La Forêt Noire* the influences of Rimbaud and Mallarmé before ending in the Dadaism of *Clé de Sol:*

On peut suivre sur le rideau
L'amour s'en va

Toujours est-il
Un piano à queue
Tout se perd. . . .

Excellent Dada pastiches would be obtained by eliminating the oratorical tone from the last chapter of *L'Enchanteur pourrissant* or by suppressing all the "likes" in certain of Giraudoux's pages. Numerous *Salons* have popularized the Dada paintings. We borrow from the two leaders of the movement two examples of the exasperated Impressionism which has up to the present characterized their productions:

Cinéma calendrier du cœur abstrait.
18—Purgatoire annonce la grande saison
Le gendarme amour qui pisse si vite
Coq et glace se couchent sous l'œil galant
Grande lampe digère vierge marie
Rue saint-jacques s'en vont les petits jolis
Vers les timbres de l'aurore blanche aorte
L'eau du diable pleure sur ma raison

(Tristan Tzara.)

Bouches.
Azur ivoire ton corps,
Amour à deux mains
Dors-tu
Mon amie bien-aimée
Chaque soir sur la poitrine
De notre amour.

(Francis Picabia.)

Will it be reserved for Jean Cocteau, after all these scales for the young poets' fingers, to found a new Impressionism? His work has until now been a barometer, sensitive to the slightest variations of the painters and musicians of the advance-guard. His *Cap de Bonne-Espérance* was disagreeably Cubist with a Mallarméan typography; but his *Poésies* are at times agreeably Dadist as for example this *Trompe-l'œil:*

Montagnes au-dessous du niveau de la mer
un cheval mange sur le toit
Pente raide la vache à l'aise
comme une mouche
caressons-la.
tiens elle est à deux kilomètres.

Derrière le sommet
(la terre est ronde)
elle se cache.
Et toi si loin
tout contre moi.

"The great literary masterpiece is never anything but a dictionary in disorder." Some sallies of this sort render bearable the reading of *Potomak* which he has himself judged without indulgence in the *Prospectus* of 1916. *Potomak* was dedicated to the Stravinsky of the recent *Sacre du Printemps*. In 1917, Cocteau presented a ballet, *Parade*, with music by Eric Satie in which the parody of Verism was so successful as to distil the same boredom one had believed reserved for the original. His *Mariés de la Tour Eiffel*, after an amusing beginning, lacks comic renewal. Cocteau is much more at his ease in the pamphlet *Le Coq et l'Arlequin* where he justifies the evolution which has led him from Debussy and Stravinsky to the group of the Six and to the author of the very beautiful *Socrate* who has become the Cézanne of musical Impressionism, is a brilliant piece of fireworks which holds out hope of less brief festivals.

Paul Dermée's books are curious documents concerning an epoch when "all human notions tremble like a mist on a raft," as he says in *Films*, collections of "duodramas, soliloquies and stories" which will surely be imitated as have already been the poems of *Spirales* (1917) and the lyric legend entitled *Beautés de 1918*. Since then Dermée has not felt obliged to return to the classic tradition like the Cocteau of *Plain-Chant*. He aims rather at keeping, in a poetic form more sober than that of *Spirales*, the vertiginous release from all restraint which made the charm of *Films*, and sometimes succeeds in *Volant d'Artimon:*

Tout se pénètre: les arbres sont des yeux,
Les amantes des couteaux dont le regard brille,
Les maisons des violons qui chantent comme des essieux
Et tes chagrins ne sont plus qu'escarbilles.

Finally, "in the advance-guard," as they say, let us note the essays of the group which has as its organs the *Gazette des Sept Arts* and *Vie des Lettres et des Arts*. Nicolas Beauduin's pretentious babblings in his synoptic poems on three planes are the parade necessary before every new side-show; but all is not rubbish in the *Poème du Vardar* by Riciotto Canudo who seeks

Dans de vagues senteurs de folie
Le sens éperdu de toute la vie.

His effort sometimes rejoins that of Marcello Fabri, author of a curious "novel of modern crowds," *L'Inconnu sur les Villes*. He participates usefully in the campaign conducted by Marcel L'Herbier and Louis Delluc to obtain from film producers that their trade shall finally become an art.

7. PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL POETRY

The poetical renewal which the Fantasists hope to find in an artistic refinement, other poets have sought in social inspiration. The contrast is brutal but comforting between certain abject mandarinisms and the sharp satires of Bruand or those powerful *Soliloques du Pauvre* by Jehan Rictus which, to employ an expression here taking its full force, are of a "very acute modernity":

Et qu'on m'tue ou qu'jaille en prison,
J'm'en fou, je n'connais pas d'contraintes;
J'suis l'Homm' modern, qui pouss' sa plainte,
Et vous savez ben qu' j'ai raison

(*L'Hiver.*)

A complex desire to "remake this life which we lead and which we no longer accept" impels Roger Dévigne, the friend of the fairies, the valiant director of *L'Encrier*, to celebrate the builders of ideal cities and the adventurous roads:

Les grands chemins marins et les syrtes profondes
—O les chemins qui ne sont pas toujours pareils
Et qui s'en vont vers l'autre bout du monde!

(*Odeur marine.*)

An anxiety dictates *Paroles devant la Vie* by Alexandre Mercereau who, in a tone intermediate between Maeterlinck's meditative analysis and the lyricism of the Unanimists, seeks to determine "in the indescribable and terrifying world splendour" the place reserved for "the perfection of this minuscular and immense life."

Into this region of disquietude and of the critical revision of modern values the sons of Israel entered without effort: "Every idea is empty for the Jew, if it be not efficacious," declared Henri Franck. *La Danse devant l'Arche* is the search for an efficacious metaphysics. The young Levite who was at first in the Temple

Le plus léger de ceux qui dansent devant l'Arche,

loses his faith in the God of his Fathers:

Les mots que tu as dits, je ne les comprends plus.

He sets out therefore in spite of the sentiment of his weakness and the temptation of hypocrisy, "towards the necessary God." For a moment (very close here to the Unanimists) he believes that God will spring from the group of his friends; but individualism remains the stronger and it is for each to recognize

Le chemin où il doit marcher seul et sans aide.

He then adores Republican France, but she does not dare affirm herself and "become her own God." Exoticism attracts him, but the rigid immobility of the old lands, their "sterile God," could not hold him. Will he come to a halt in the poetical creation which equals man to God? No. For full artistic enjoyment requires that one shall already have found God or not look for him. He has not reached that point:

Je suis un feu de joie au cœur d'un carrefour . . .
Je suis un des relais où Dieu s'est arrêté . . .

Death surprised Franck in that ardent, happy solitude:

Si l'arche est vide où tu pensais trouver la loi,
Rien n'est réel que ta danse . . .

Our analysis has shown the strong unity of this philosophical poem, our extracts prove the aptitude of the blank *alexandrin* (French equivalent of the decasyllables of *Paradise Lost*) to embody abstract truths.

It is easy to imagine the disciplined works a Henri Franck might have written had he been strengthened by age in his triple assurance of "professor, Jew and Frenchman." One would not dare wish André Spire a calm which would exhaust the unequal and powerful lyricism of *Versets*. The two parts of this work—*Et vous riez!* and *Poèmes Juifs*—offer a complete image of that spirit whose law is a prophetic disquietude.

Je ne sais pas aimer sèchement, comme un prêtre,

he already said in *La Cité présente*. He feels only impatience for everything not absolute:

Je cherche un univers où l'on ne classe pas,
Où l'on ignore, où l'on devine
(*Et vous riez!*)

Encouraged by his friends, he went to the people. The people did not understand him. His friends accuse him of having betrayed them

and continue their artificial life. Death destroys his loves and grief crushes him. At times he admits he is tired of theories:

Oh! n'inventons plus de systèmes!
Repose-toi, tête blessée,
Sur les genoux de ton amie

(*Id.*)

In a hope of simplicity, he abandons his books and, like Vigny, turns to nature there to flee men and find God; but soon he discovers in his turn that nature is "the enemy":

Tu ne calmeras pas mon cœur inquiet, Nature.
Moqueuse, en tes yeux verts l'éternité me raille

(*Et vous riez!*)

Eternally dissatisfied he sharpens a Heine-like irony against others and against himself:

Dieu t'est-il donc si nécessaire?
N'es-tu pas l'alcool, le tabac, les femmes?

(*Et vous riez!*)

For those of his race, Spire is pitiless and lashes them harshly:

Tu es content, tu es content!
Ton nez est presque droit, ma foi!
Et puis tant de chrétiens ont le nez un peu courbe!

(*Poèmes juifs.*)

This Israel, which Franck said was "dead of having given a God to the world," Spire wishes to wrest from its lethargy. He sees in it "the only proletariat in which I can still hope." Prophet of a hopeless faith, he reminds it of the precepts of the Talmud and of the Ritual, throws it the savage lessons of *Nudités* or this fierce appeal:

Aux armes!
Ecoute Israël,

(*Poèmes juifs.*)

Le Secret mingles moreover the mystical hope of the "new Saviour" with brutal mockery. If we compare *Le Printemps* with the poems which bore the same title in *Versets* an appeasement will be noted; and likewise Spire who formerly begged his "genii" to protect him against the French spirit, has described his devastated country in touching terms. Events now render possible this exodus which he dreams of for Israel

Qui n'aura plus peur de son vieux péché
Et qui laissera ses yeux indulgents
Jouir des mouvements, des lignes, des formes,
Que jadis il nommait une abomination.

(*Le Secret.*)

The best poems in *Le Secret* are, however, those which, like *Il y a* or *Et demain*, exhale his mournful harshness and the mistrust of the man constantly backsliding, borrowed by him from the sacred books; and, in a striking poetic form, his drama *Samuel* exalts also the dream which, for centuries, comforts and dupes Israel:

Le lion comme le bœuf mangera de la paille
Et un petit enfant les conduira.

Edmond Fleg's aim is less to oppose than to reconcile the two ideals of Judaism and of contemporary culture. His capital work, *Ecoute, Israël* (the cry of Franck and of Spire in their supreme warnings), will retrace the lyrical history of the Hebrew people from Abraham to Wilson. The first two books of the seven have alone appeared. They were moreover the hardest to write. The subject called for a hieratic form, a scrupulous transcription of the proper names which strips them visually of the accustomed emotion, giving them a voluntary rigidity of attitude:

Et Dieu ferma les yeux du Père des Souffrants
Et Iacob mit ses os dans la tombe en pleurant.

(*Vision d'Itsrac.*)

The consciousness of such obstacles to lyricism, the dangerous necessity of evoking Moses after Vigny, Samson after Milton, Boaz after Hugo will render more sensible the verbal splendour of *L'Aube du Temple*, the fierce grandeur of *Eaux de malédiction*, the imaginative force which in *Le Livre de la Pâque*, conjures up the vision of Elohim without weakening it and in *Le Livre des Semaines* his grief, which makes Moses and the Eternal talk together, which to the Psalms adds the canticle of the stars, which renews the melancholy magnificence of the death of Moses:

Le nombre de mes jours est une nuit trop brève.
Ne tue pas le dormeur au milieu de son rêve,
Et désire, Adonaï, que mon œuvre s'achève
Afin que ton nom vive et que vive ta loi!

(*Moïse.*)

—an epic work sustained by the pride of the race which was chosen and has chosen.

Le mur des Pleurs is a symbolical vision of war and of the modern world which the author of *La Maison du Bon Dieu* can also regard with humour. After a prophetic sleep, the Wandering Jew resumes his journey which will last as long as tears flow; but he does not despair, as he tells his brethren:

Vous ne gémissez point sur un Temple détruit.
Celui que vous pleurez n'a pas encore été construit.

The beautiful *Psaume de la Terre promise* defines this original thought which does not separate the accomplishment of the Messianic hopes from the pacific progress of civilized nations. The *Psaume* is a song of joy. It is also a lesson, an invitation to triumphant Zionism to show itself worthy of its victory, to make "the tree with roots of love" grow in Judea,

Jusqu'aux tempts où partout sur la terre féconde
Tous les peuples voudront le planter à leur tour.

To social, or, more exactly, cosmic poetry Blaise Gendrars has brought the methods of Cubism. The author of *Du monde entier* and of *La Fin du monde, filmée par l'ange N. D.*, loves Apollinaire and remembers Max Jacob. His favourite form is the occasional poem and the *Dix-neuf poèmes élastiques* are so many receptacles. In these improvisations which many contemporaries have copied, Cendrars amuses himself amusing us. At times he realizes linear progress over Rimbaud and extracts four verses from these words: "*Envergures. Fusées. Ebullition. Cris.*" On other occasions—the best—he shows himself less economical and concentrates Cubism into an ingenious "wireless" style:

Gong tam-tam zanzibar bête de la jungle rayons X
express bistouri symphonie.

The influence of Cendrars and of Max Jacob, counteracted by memories of Romains, is sensible in *Lampes à arc* and *Feuilles de température* by Paul Morand. Thus the poetic art of *Plaque indicatrice* remains vague and generous. Too many flutterings in Giraudoux's manner spoil the exotic charm of *Tendres Stocks* the three portraits of which are so delicately drawn. Morand has quickly recognized that mechanical jokes are less suited to his real talent than the delicate touches of *L'Ode à Proust* and he has become the brilliant story-teller of *Ouvert la Nuit* and *Fermé la Nuit*.

Aurore's England has somewhat intoxicated Morand. The Americans have gone to the head of Pierre Drieu La Rochelle. All the political and economical problems have assailed him at the same time. *Fond de cantine* is the liquidation of war in a young mind. The form, at times almost purified,

Ah! rappelons toujours les adieux à Verdun
De cette armée d'amants qui mourut assouvie
Non flétris de regrets mais léguant à la vie
Le désir des Français, ô subtil gout humain . . .

usually heaps up the intemperately Claudelian verse paragraphs:

Non canons ont nié un horizon de maisons. D'abord nous avons enfoncé les toits das les murs, l'illusion des portes a été soufflée et le ciel a dilaté les fenêtres dans une dérision. La colère des obus a fait éclat chez les épiciers et la honteuse obésité des édredons crève par les brèches
(*Guerre, fatalité du moderne*)

—a juvenile eloquence which seeks its discipline everywhere and flirts even with that Dada of which Philippe Soupault has magisterially defined the program:

L'intelligence a un avenir.
Dada n'a aucun avenir.
L'intelligence est une manie.
Dada est Dada
(*Catalogue N° 7*)

that is to say, nothing—or, through apparent anarchy, a new order. Of this Order, Drieu La Rochelle—after the analysis of *Etat civil* where he seemed to mark time without advancing—has indicated the way. *Mesure de la France,* in addition to an eloquent homage to Raymond Lefebvre, attempts the reckoning of a generation and advocates, with touching seriousness, "an intellectual, moral, corporeal redintegration."

8. JULES ROMAINS AND THE ABBAYE

The complete story of the Abbaye of Creteil has not yet been written. There will be found in an appendix to this book some notes by René Arcos on that important subject. For the literary student two facts are to be retained: there was, about 1906, a general effort to renew poetry by an original conception of the poet's rôle, and this effort succeeded. There exists at present a Unanimist doctrine, philosophical and poetic, formulated by Jules Romains, of which young writers, like Jean Hytier, René Maublano and Cl. A. Puget

make use and which has manifested its vitality in recent works such as J. Portail's *Androlite*, Henri Dalby's *Poèmes de la vie mordue* and G. Audisio's *Hommes au Soleil.*

An attentive study of their works suffices to dissipate the prejudice that the two founders of the Abbaye, Duhamel and Vildrac, are Unanimists. No doubt Jules Romains' friendship is accompanied by an intellectual influence too imperious always to be resisted—too reminiscent at times of those ingots of *Odes et Prières* which cannot be coined. Their originality lies not in this but in a sort of French Whitmanism, quiet and penetrating. All Charles Vildrac's works could be given the title of one of them, the *Livre d'Amour.* Each states the problem of life among men and formulates the same solution for it:

Mais si l'on avait assez d'amour . . .

One must have enough love to become

Un homme dont la vie rayonne large et loin . . .
(*Etre un homme.*)

The absence of human love is his sole sadness:

Dans tous mes gestes d'aujourd'hui
Qui sont mes gestes de chaque jour,
Je n'ai pas pu mettre d'amour.
(*Tristesse.*)

War is the negation of love—whence the revolt of the *Chants du Désespéré.* Through this bitterness however his soul has remained outstretched

Vers un morceau bleu du ciel de tous
(*Elégie à Henri Doucet*)

and, faithful to the lesson of the great white bird, he has hoped a day would come when Europe would no longer be

Un déploiement de forces divergentes,
Mais un seul destin, un amour, un arbre!
(*Europe.*)

And, however painful to him may have been the war which changes man into human material, he has refused to repeat for long its indignant echo. For anger is "impure and sterile." On its ruins, sustained by friendship, he has sung anew

L'inquiète joie, la fragile joie
(*Il y a d'autres poèmes.*)

The beauty of this inspiration is visible. Its weakness is a want of solid intellectual structure. Vildrac's art has not found its balance. It oscillates between a good-nature in the manner of Paul Fort (*Si l'on gardait . . .*) and the masked romanticism of *Visite*, between the eloquence of *L'Adieu* and the realism (plus a reasoner) of *Le Paquebot Tenacity*. He wrote *Découvertes* in prose because the most deliberately prosaic verse still keeps certain exigencies and suffers from the obligation to tell little sentimental stories like *L'Intermède* (*Chants du Désespéré*). Thus Charles Vildrac's most perfect successes are the poems of meditative intimacy.

Georges Duhamel's first volume of verse contains a curious *Sonnet d'Une:*

Je suis l'Esprit, je suis l'éternelle Beauté . . .
Et Dieu s'il est, n'est Dieu que pour m'avoir crée
(*Des légendes, des batailles.*)

which shows him very far from Unanimism. He has, moreover, in an article on Romains, defined his position: "I confess, for my part, that I seek isolation and derive from Unanimist adventures nothing but suspicion, regret or disgust." Comparing his love poems with *Le Voyage des amants* or this beginning which might be by a weaker Romains:

Ce cher bonheur que j'abrite
Entre mes deux mains crispées,
Est-ce donc lui, frère étrange,
Que tu ne peux pardonner?
(*Elégiés*)

with this song of spontaneous tenderness:

C'était un matin de mai
Gonflé d'un bonheur absurde,
Gonflé d'un bonheur sans mesure
Et que tout semblait approuver
(*Elégiés*),

it will be agreed that his nature did not in fact incline him towards Unanimist adventures:

Car je ne possède aucune puissance
Si ce n'est l'amour et ce cœur tremblant.
(*Elégiés.*)

Now, Duhamel seeks his universality not through a synthesis, but through a series of analyses. His unity is not the group but the

couple for which the *Manuel de Déification* has only mistrust—a couple composed of a patient and of an observer. In the two poems (*Le Voyageur* and *Retour du Voyageur*) which form an arch beneath which flows the lyricism of *Selon ma loi,* the couple is man and his environment. *Servitudes* tell the story of a friendship. *Compagnons* evokes travel parties. Is it not remarkable that Duhamel's most moving poems are precisely the *Retour du Voyageur* in which the latter feels himself liberated from the past:

Victoire! mon désir a donc cette puissance
De me remplir et de repousser au dehors . . .
Tout ce qui fait s'arrêter et s'asseoir;

the end of *Servitudes* where, the tie of friendship broken, they meet again:

Dans l'air fort et froid de la solitude

and this *Adieu au compagnon de voyage:* "We shall each be one . . . " which is the highest inspiration of *Compagnons?* The four ballads with which *Elégies* terminates are reproached with being stories from *La Vie des martyrs* put into verse. Their interest is precisely that they establish Duhamel's attitude—the attitude of a doctor touched by the failures of the body and of the mind, showing how this poet could become the novelist of human pity admired by us in *Civilisation* and *Confession de Minuit.*

Duhamel has refused the label "Unanimist." Romains himself accepted it, after 1911, only for the convenience of classification: "We have," he declared, "no internal or external rule, no definite, absolute formulas. Each goes according to his inspiration or following his personal program." However literary history has reserved to Romains, Duhamel, Vildrac, Arcos, Chennevière, Durtain and Jouve the name of Unanimist poets without applying it to Mercereau or to Barzun who figured among the founders of the Abbaye. What is there then in common among our seven poets? First, the same conception of poetic form. Which? Here are two texts in which, eight years apart, Romains evokes the poet in the melancholy of evening:

Maintenant rien n'accourt vers mon âme aux écoutes;
La solitude exhale un ronron de rouet,
Et l'étroit lumignon verse son jour muet
Sur le papier très blanc comme le sol des routes.

(*L'Ame des hommes, 1904.*)

Car à quoi bon les larmes
Si l'on ne pleure pas

D'être seul, sans espoir.
Avec un doux regret
Et de ne plus avoir
Pour écrire sa peine
Qu'un morceau de buvard
Eclairé par la lune?

(*Odes, 1912.*)

In the first four verses a contemporary thought puts on a garment, cut centuries ago, which generations of poets have donned after some slight alterations. In the two stanzas of the *Ode* this thought has found a new expression, *its* expression. Literally, the soul has created itself a body, what Romains has called "an immediate poetry, that is to say the direct expression, without adornment or make-up, of the reality our soul perceives." The characteristics of this new style are the absence of symbol and allegory, the substitution for an arbitrarily regular unity cut by artificial rhymes of a variable rhythm giving a style to current speech and sustained by alliterations and "a sonorous relation more original, fresher, more appropriate to metrical circumstances" [1]—in brief, the creation of a free strophe equally apt for translating ardent meditation without dryness and for elevating the minute of emotion to the poetic plane. United in this renovation of French poetry, the poets of the *Abbaye* do not however form a literary school. They are something more living, a group. This again, Romains has expressed vigorously in *Les Copains.* There is no trace of official solidarity in this understanding, but the consciousness of a solid reality: "They were content to be seven good chums . . . they were content to have acted together, and to be together on the same spot of the earth to remember it." And let not the eleven bottles with which this final feast is moistened blind us to the force of Bénin's last discourse: "You have restored the pure Act . . . Pure Act! Pure absolute! Nothing freer than you! You possess, moreover, since this evening, Supreme Unity . . . This evening you are one god in seven persons . . . Where find, to-night, the equivalent of what is in you?"

We have come now to the heart of Unanimism which is less a scientific thesis based upon the works of Tarde, Durkheim, Lévy-Brühl and Le Bon, than a vision of the universe where the intelligence and the sensibility of a philosopher and a poet are put at the service of a faith: "If you doubt the unanimous, create it," says the *Manuel de*

[1] The *Petit Traité de Versification* (1923) by Romains and Cheunevières (1923) gives a complete exposition of this new technique showing how "it attaches itself to that of the seventeenth century by the natural way of budding."

Déification. "Man is opaque to man," declared Franck. Romains is not without egotism:

Par l'âbime dont tu doutes
Un homme est poussé vers toi;
Vous glissez l'un contre l'autre
Comme deux astres fuyards

(*L'Automne*);

but he knows too that in this instinct of narrow individualism another need opposes itself:

Une sorte de carrefour
Vous appelle à la fin des rues,
Mais tous les hommes s'en détournent
Par des chemins qu'ils ont appris.

(*Ode.*)

There is but one means of resolving the conflict. The *Manuel* tells us what it is: "If you see a group forming in a city street, walk up to it and give it your body . . . Penetrate the mass gently. Question the men. Learn why there is a group. Then say words which will incite it to live. Augment its assent. Fan the fury or the pity of the men. And think the group." Think the group to the point of deifying it, he repeats in the meditation which terminates *Puissances de Paris:* "We, poor men, shall teach groups to become gods, by telling them what passes from their consciousness through us." Now this conception reposes upon the conviction, nourished by philosophy and by concrete experience, that time and space are things infinitely free. "Space belongs to no one," he observes in *Puissances de Paris,* "and no being has succeeded in appropriating a morsel of space to saturate it with his sole existence. Everything interlaces, coincides, cohabits." As for time, Godard in *Mort de quelqu'un* reflects the thought of his creator when he discovers it to be "arbitrary and elastic"; but, if Romains' thought is firmly founded in logic, what animates him first of all is faith in his apostleship: "What I say will perhaps be heard by twenty only and grasped by five; but the birth of the least of the gods would suffice for the glory of the earth."

Romanticism, it will be said. One would, indeed, find in Romains oratorical outbursts in the style of Hugo. Ambitious to convince, he denies himself none of the means by which men are persuaded. Eloquence is one of the surest. There are in *Un être en marche* and *Sur les quais de la Villette* very eloquent pages. The *Ode à la foule qui est ici* employs rhetoric to awaken permanently in this mass

Le vestige du dieu que tu est maintenant.

"Wrest the groups at times from their torpor," counselled the *Manuel.* "Shock them." Romains' work is a lesson in shocking. He enjoys shocking minds and he is not wrong, in *L'Ode à la Foule,* to evoke "the brutality of his love." If he helps us to discover, with the powers of Paris, certain of its beauties, he has none the less jealously guarded the harshness of the Cévennes. He asks of them not only an occasional beautiful picture:

Ce qui pense dans moi ressemble au chevrier
Qui est sur les plateaux un matin de printemps;
La brume emplit tous les vallons jusqu'à ses pieds
Tandis que le soleil lui dilate les tempes.

(*Un être en marche.*)

He also recruits in them a fierce intellectual energy akin to the brutality of the people in *Cromedeyre-le-Vieil:*

Il faudra beaucoup de caresses
Afin que les corps de vos femmes
Ne soient plus de froids étrangers . . ."

announces mother Agatha for whom evidently love is not an end. Is it anything but a means for him who writes in the *Manuel:* "You shall not avoid coupling; but you shall distrust the couple. The wise man will put love to sleep"? The couple, the family, are so many obstacles to this unanimous will which gives *Le Voyage des Amants* its beautiful peroration. The group must be awakened by shocking it, by scandalizing it, by mystifying it at need. Romains is capable of sympathy. The "European and human" emotion is great in several tales in *Sur les quais.* In *La Charge des autobus* and *Cromedeyre* he has elevated contemporary actions to the epic; but it would be foolish to count upon his lucidity's disarming. He creates gods, he intends to force their acceptance. His art is a virile art which hates sentimentality: "You must have either the consent or the submission of other men." Ambert and Issoire are quite powerless to give or to refuse consent. By mystifying them, the chums subdue the two towns with a flood of buffooneries and of a priapism a hundred times healthier than the whinings of the adepts of a religion of humanity. Mystification is creative. It has drawn Donogoo-Tonka from nothingness. Romains' violence strikes souls that a God may spring from them.

Romains' dogmatism is undeniable. Romains would not be Romains did he not Cæsarize. Each of his books requires acquaintance with

those which preceded it. *Le Bourg régénéré* is very amusing. It is above all implacable. There is nothing which does not converge in it to justify the subtitle, "*Conte de la vie unanime*"; but one is a little surprised at the reproach which Gourmont addressed to *Mort de quelqu'un:* "I believe his method would be more appreciated if he applied it less strictly and less visibly." What strikes us, on the contrary, each time we read this book, is the art with which Romains has varied the different soul-states he depicted, passing from the individual to the collective by rarely subtle gradations. "Sometimes you will feel yourselves fully in the power of the gods, their torrent rushing through you. Bring back your dead and give him to drink." *Mort de quelqu'un* describes, apropos of a banal death, an unconscious draft in ordinary minds of that conscious work prescribed to us by the *Manuel.* Retaining the appearance of time and of space, Romains pierces their illusion and, without a philosophical commentary, by the power of the story alone, restores to human thought the rights over human duration claimed by the general in *L'Armée dans la ville:*

Mon corps est en train de mourir . . .
Mais je sens que l'armée se retrouve et se tient . . .
C'est toi qui vas finir. Je te passe ma mort . . .
Je suis vivant. C'est moi qui suis vivant!

In operating what Duhamel calls "a displacement of the pathetic," Romains has succeeded so far as to blind certain critics too uniquely sensible to the verbal virtuosity of the descriptions in *Puissances de Paris*, to the concrete richness of *Sur les quais*, to the moving sobriety of *Mort de quelqu'un:* "I am going to continue to live, in my rhythm and in my place, a measure before some, a measure after others, in time with nobody; and, some future evening, I, too, shall be someone dead." Stopping short at these external qualities of his work, a critic has said that the prose writer exceeded the poet in him. It would be just as legitimate to confine him in the laboratory to carry on there the experiments of *La Vision extra-rétinienne* tending to give all the regions of the periphery of the group "human body" the function of which the eye seems to have secured the privilege. Romains' rude, tenacious will exploits a mind so rich and so various that, with him, wishing is almost synonymous with doing. The writer who ingeniously renews a theme at first sight very unprofitable, devoting half of *Un être en marche* to the promenade of a little girls' boarding-school, and finds in it unforgettable accents, is, when it pleases him, an excellent

novelist; but the source of this inspiration is in *La vie unanime* and in the *Odes*. The key phrases of *Les Copains* are full of poetry: "The table was at the level of his navel; and the group of the comrades clung to him, ended in him, like a taper in its flame . . . In the soft night, they enter joy with a double ploughshare. Then they knew what the world is for two men in motion." Only a poet could put the subjects of *L'armée* and *Cromedeyre* on the stage; and it is the poet who concludes the cinematographic tale of *Donogoo:* "As if, yielding to a friendly pressure, the world renounced, for one evening, its spatial fashion and all sorts of habits." His originality however (and hence it is he disconcerts some) is not one-sided. Certain have taken *M. Le Trouhadec saisi par la débauche* for a simple farce, insensible to its effects of "geometric comedy," of action played between the lines defined by personages whose diverse faces are combined in the manner of cubes turned over and over. Likewise *Lucienne* may be treated in the first place as excellent "*canular*" tending to persuade women they are "like that"; but one soon discovers beneath the paradox a deeper truth: the movement of two individuals who tend to form a couple, an aspiration first thwarted, then favored by the "Barbelent group." Is this to say that Unanimism—capable of becoming in less skilful hands a convenient "dodge"—will supplant the "psychology of penetration?" No, but it supplements this, adding to it the sense of a life where "beauty and love are rooted in a dense matter." Here again we note a close alliance between thought and vision.

This poet deserves to have one of his verses borrowed:

L'air qu'on respire a comme un goût mental,

true of all his work, without however his being carried away by abstraction. To the variety of the rhythms corresponds an equal abundance of images, more voluntary in the first volumes, more flexible after the *Odes*.

To approach the master of the Unanimist doctrine as a frigid philosopher would be the gravest error. There are few dramas so moving as that which is revealed in this poetry; but this drama involves the total grandeur of a being. Thus intelligence never abdicates in it. Romains has confessed an admiration for Rimbaud. It is difficult to imagine him repeating the words of *Le Délire:* "I loved idiotic paintings . . ." His fantasy is never perverse. Lacking certitude he stiffens himself in a virile pride:

Je ne veux pas d'un Dieu tremblant devant ma force
(*Prières.*)

The *Prières* and certain *Odes* reflect the disarray of the man who no longer hears the appeal of his truth or attempts to escape it:

Une lueur cherche à m'atteindre
Dans l'arrière-coin du sommeil,
Comme une main froide qui fouille
Le terrier où tremble une bête.

(*Odes.*)

He has not, however, abandoned the struggle, proving by his example how far Unanimism becomes one with the conquest of the world by the individual. For Romains is a conquerer, the brother of the chief who, in his first drama, dominates the two hostile groups—the army which is his work, the city prepared for his assassination. *Europe* attests this superiority of the poet to his time. He has said, with a penetrating purity, how, on the eve of the catastrophe, he sang:

Nous aurions sauvé le monde
En sifflant un air de danse.

The event has passed:

Il a broyé pesamment,
Mis en morceaux, mis en poudre
Certaines images du monde
Que les hommes trop mortels
Portaient sous les os du front.

Beneath the unexpected blow the poet has reeled, to recover himself instantly:

Ils auront beau pousser leur crime;
Je reste garant et gardien
De deux or trois choses divines.

During the tempest he held fast; and now, here he is sounding the recall of intelligences, strengthened by the ordeal in his fervent truth. At times the god that he wanted, that he created with all his visionary power and slaked with his authoritative music, remains a moment hidden from the human eye:

Mais, quand il reparait tout à coup,
Il se développe une évidence
Véritablement universelle;
Et, dans une espèce de fanfare,
Votre vie en bloc est soulevée
Comme un poids au bout d'un bras tendu

(*Voyages des amants.*)

Georges Chennevière is Romains' most faithful disciple. The subject of his *Printemps* was rather schematic: the influence of renewal on the soul of a young convalescent—enthusiastic dreams, disappointments, suicide; but some pretty notations adorned this dramatic poem:

Le jour sera chaud et doré
comme le pain qui sort du four
et dont on mord la croûte.

Poèmes accentuates this duality. *Avenir* and *Rengaine* are school-exercises, *Dispersion* shows a Unanimist sifting outworn Maeterlinck for the Dadaists' sand-castles. Without Unanimism, Chennevière would perhaps have remained the elegiac poet of *En moi*, faithful to Samain's nonchalance:

L'ennui familier qui grimpe à mes genoux
Et la douleur qui me sourit en robe simple.

(*Hiver.*)

Through contact with Romains he acquired the strong discipline which controls this grace:

Ce que je regardais n'est plus qu'un souvenir
Depuis que je le vois.
La fleur que je sentais a perdu son parfum
Depuis que je la nomme

(*Examen.*)

Chennevière's originality will however be found in the meditative poems like *Fêtes* or in the fresh idyll *Le Chant du Verger*, the originality of a musician with a very fraternal accent who delicately intermingles the songs of young girls before there springs from this symphony the graver voice of love:

Je sentais, contre ma poitrine,
Sur mon cœur, le poids retenu
De ta douce main repliée,
Le chien de la ferme aboyait,
Et le ciel tombait sur mes lèvres
En même temps que ton baiser.

René Arcos preaches the same faith in the divine:

Quelque chose partout ne cesse pas de naître . . .

(*Ce qui nait.*)

but seems to seek it less in a group to come than in a heroic continuity where the past collaborates:

Je vois une guirlande allongée à travers les siècles,
un toast prolongé de coupe en coupe à travers les siècles
Je vois les immortels qui accrurent le dieu . . .

(*Idem*).

For the form too he seemed to be at a crossroads of influences, remembering Verhaeren in the lyrical descriptions:

Ainsi sans se lasser
Les dieux apoplectiques
Aidés par les furies
Barattaient la bataille
Qui moussait jusqu'aux nuées . . .

(*Le Sang des autres*)

and Romains in the meditative halts:

Rien n'est perdue puisqu'il suffit
Qu'un seul de nous dans la tourmente
Reste pareil à ce qu'il fut
Pour sauver tout l'espoir du monde

(*Le Sang des autres*).

It was also of Romains that P.-J. Jouve was thinking when he wrote:

Des tics douleureux déchirent
L'air mâle et heureux.
Je n'ai rien que mon réveil
Et l'éclatement du monde;

(*Parler*);

but intellectual ardour at times masked his emotion:

Je suis une droite tirée
Dans un réseau dur d'autres droites,
Où chacun n'est rien des autres,
Où nul point ne passe deux fois.

(*Présences.*)

His drama, *Les Deux Forces*, sought to introduce the Claudelian lyricism into a Unanimist conception. In *Vous êtes des hommes* this Claudel influence often expands the verse into a larger unit and the human tenderness speaks in it a language deliberately rude:

Allons—plus haut, plus loin, plus éternellement!
Vers notre juste joie et vers notre éternité!
Allons—pour notre éternité!
(*Tu n'auras pas la justice et tu n'auras pas l'éternité*)
. . . Tais-toi, tais-toi, va, allons ensemble.

Luc Durtain underwent the influence of the poets he has celebrated in *Face à Face*. *Kong-Harald*, the poem of a cruise in the North, describes the landscapes in Claudelian language:

Et augmenté tel qu'une femme, mais en mâle, j'ai conçu
Les épaules de moraines formidables, le déblais dressés en cônes,
Les mousses germant polygonales par ordre,
Les vertèbres des grands monstres, renversés comme des sièges vides . . .

Among these monsters appears the traveller, friend of Romains and Duhamel:

O moi qui ne m'ai pas, mais suis
Dans l'inappropriable étendue ce lieu non clos
Dont en broutant le "je" s'approche . . .

Durtain's poetry occasionally seeks subtleties in the style of Fargue, in a frame which is Cendrars': the whole world. Such a verse, purely enumerative, from *Lise:*

L'ennui, les haines, les gifles, intrigues, cadeaux, sornettes, devinettes . . .

has no other end than to communicate to the reader that sensation of an immense, peopled space which is expressed with a powerful familiarity in *Le Retour des hommes.*

It is in *Douze cent mille*—the novel of an enriched workman who "leads the life" then, ruined, returns to his little town—that Durtain has given his full measure. Braving the reproach of seeming to color at times a humanitarian chromolithograph, he has wished to carry this fresco as far as possible in its details, faithful to the principle stated in *L'Etape nécessaire:* "greatness is framed with facts." Thence his strength the heavinesses of which are not those of an out of date naturalism. Thence his success in painting, in the bosom of a powerfully evoked society, a hero living solidly in this work massive in style with violently fraternal resonances.

9. PAUL CLAUDEL AND PAUL VALÉRY

Arthur Rimbaud's name has recurred incessantly in this review of contemporary poets who have often been intoxicated with the heady wine he poured them. Among Rimbaud's authentic successors should be named, with O. W. Milosz whose *Méphiboseth* and *Miquel Magnara* too uniformly sumptuous, contain penetrating verses, Saint Léger-Léger whose *Eloges* haunt the memory mysteriously.

And we must here speak worthily of Paul Claudel.

Claudel is a great Catholic poet. If he has chosen Rimbaud among

his masters, it is because that Rimbaud whose trace Péguy thought he found in the spiritual stress of *L'Otage* appeared to him a poetic and Christian precursor:

Ton siècle étant redevenu païen, tu avais à recommencer la recherche et l'attente avec ta vie
Des hommes de l'Ancien Testament qui marchaient à la recontre de Messie.
(*Consécration.*)

Very early Claudel felt the necessity of

Quelqu'un qui soit en moi plus moi-même que moi
(*Vers d'exil.*)

Let us play fair with him who is standing

Les deux pieds solidement assurés sur la base inébranlable de la Foi.
(*La Messe là-bas.*)

Let us not confront him with historical considerations when he thanks Sainte-Geneviève for having twice driven back the invader or invokes the Virgin:

Parce que vous m'avez sauvé, parce que vous avez sauvé la France
(*La Vierge à midi.*)

It is logical that his *Art poétique* should be divided into a *Connaissance du temps*, a *Développement de l'Eglise* and a *Traité de la Co-naissance au monde et à soi-même* which ends in Conscience and in God. A metaphysical affirmation dominates his whole work and it is literally exact that he conducts "his arguments as Cacus did the stolen beasts he drove to his cavern." Claudel brings us back to God because his point of departure is God. Because Claudel is a Christian poet, the stake of the dramatic struggles between his heroes—between Sygne and Badilon, between the Pope and his two nephews—will be the salvation or the loss of a soul. His lyricism will prolong the *Psalms* and *Ecclesiastes*. *La Jeune fille Violaine* will have invocations inspired by the *Song of Songs*. Because "*Naitre, c'est co-naitre,*" he will be able to write of Charles-Louis Philippe:

Le voici qui se passe de nous, nous passons hors de sa connaissance.

There is more however. In the *Introduction à quelques œuvres* Claudel asserts that the true maxim of man is not the "Know thyself" of Socrates but rather the Christian "Forget thyself." Forget thyself, *ne impedas musicam*, in order to taste the whole universe. It is the position he took in *L'Art poétique:* "We shall place ourselves before the totality of beings, like a critic before the production of a poet."

One sees how, God having delivered to the poet "uttering the name of each thing" the spectacle of the world, he justifies by His example what he says of his Saint-Louis:

La seule chose qui délivre un Roi, c'est d'avoir les deux mains liées.

Catholic, Claudel can, without fear of dispersion, be universal. Like his Besme, he contemplates "the extent of space, the duration of time." In the *Introduction* he has explained how his characters rebelled against the "reduced universe" in which he at first enclosed them and demanded the whole world; how, one generation not exhausting a drama, he had been led to extend over sixty years the trilogy of *L'Otage*. He has, before space, the Emperor's attitude:

Je me tourne vers l'Est et je me tourne vers l'Ouest . . .
(*Repos du septième jour.*)

On the banks of the Rhône he sees:

L'Europe autour de nous de toutes parts pour la recueiller profondément exfoliée se lever et s'ouvrir comme une rose immense
(*Cantate*).

His view embraces in a single glance some small village of France and some star in the southern sky. For he unites things not in space but in time: "Now I see Waterloo; and yonder, in the Indian Ocean, I see at the same time a pearl-fisher whose head suddenly breaks the water near his catamaran." All ends in time: "I say the whole universe is only a machine for marking time," declares *L'Art poétique*. The emperor moves human wills

Afin que chacun remplisse son heure avec exactitude
Et qu'à l'Eternité soit fournie une mesure correcte du temps
(*Repos*).

Platonic memories, vivified, however, by a Christian poet. In *Tête d'or*, he mingles Christian images with pagan invocations, Latin names with biblical names, and lends automatic rifles to the hordes of a European Attila. His reason is that the past remains ever living in the present: "It seems that what exists can never cease to be . . . at every hour of the Earth it is all the hours at the same time." The only hour is that read in the constellations, in the signs of the Zodiac, the eternal symbolic procession which passes on the highest platform of the *L'Homme et son Désir*. About these landmarks, true because allegorical, Claudel reconstructs time by grandiose masses:

Le temps qui meurt et dispose tout
Se retire de nous comme la mer.

(*Tête d'or.*)

Among all the moments, he cherishes those which are not precise hours: "That hour which is between spring and summer," in the *Cantate*, or "the hour which is not an hour: midday," in *L'échange*. He loves its detachment:

Midi au ciel. Midi au centre de notre vie.
Et nous voilà ensemble, autour de ce même âge de notre moment, au milieu de l'horizon complet, libres, déballés,
Decollés de la terre, regardant derrière et devant.

(*Partage de Midi.*)

And doubtless circumstances have favoured this cosmic vision in the man who has scoured the world as the representative of France; but who does not recognize the accent of a mystic conviction in the proclamation of this instability?

Toutes ces choses qui étaient là pour toujours, qu'est-ce qui leur prend tout à coup qu'elles disparaissent?
Voilà que c'est nous qui sommes plus solides qu'elles, et c'est elles tout-à-coup qui bougent et qui nous laissent

(*Saint Martin.*)

The same universality characterizes the influences which have aided the liberation of his genius. Rimbaud and the Bible have already been mentioned. The English lyric poets and Shakespeare must be added. We find in the first version of *Tête d'or* (1890) images of human life which directly recall *Macbeth*, and many of the moral reflections have the tone of Shakespeare in repose; but Claudel's true master, from the beginning, is Æschylus of whom he was later to translate the *Orestia*. The second part of *Tête d'or* evokes the memory of the *Persii*, and the last takes place in the setting of *Prometheus*. The interest of these remarks is merely to determine Claudel's points of departure. His originality shines forth fully even if, in *Repos*, the Emperor's descent into Hades makes us speak of Æschylan grandeur and his ascent to the serene of Wagnerian sublimity.

For this universal art the classic verse is too narrow an instrument. Claudel has shown himself capable of writing regular verses—for example, the *Vers d'exil* or the *Dédicace:*

O seul enfant de roi parmi tant de servantes!
O pélerin unique en marche vers la mer!

Etoile du matin dans le soir revivante!
Astre anadyomène au fond du jardin vert!

He who, later, will call upon

Les neuf Muses! Aucune n'est de trop pour moi!
(*Les muses*)

seeks, beginning with the *Fragment d'un Drame*, an adequate form for his inspiration. If we compare the two versions of *Tête d'or*, we shall see that this music is not at all haphazard improvisation but masterly progress. Thus:

Oui! quelle chose étonnante c'est que de vivre!
Celui qui vit et pose ses deux pieds sur la terre qu'envie-t-il donc aux dieux? (*1889*)

becomes

Oui! Quelle chose c'est que de vivre!
Quelle chose étonnante c'est
Que de vivre! Quelle chose puissante c'est que de vivre!
Celui qui vit
Et qui pose les deux pieds sur la terre, qu'envie-t-il donc aux dieux?
(*1895.*)

Fed on the Bible and on Rimbaud, Claudel has constructed his verse paragraph which equals in flexibility the mobile rhythm of Æschylus and the Shakespearean mixture of verse and prose. This verse paragraph is plastic enough to serve at once the dramatist and the lyric poet. It is remarkable that the typographical singularities which at first divert—words isolated or cut, detached exclamations, etc.—abound above all in the dramatic works where it is important to guide the actor. In the religious poems, on the contrary, the solemn verse paragraph marches with a slower pace and readily encumbers itself with rhymes and assonances:

Seigneur je ne suis pas digne que ce toit vous serve d'abri,
Mais dites seulement une parole et celui que vous aimez sera guéri.
(*Processionnal.*)

The verse paragraphs can even, as in the *Ode à Dante*, construct for themselves strophes with interlacing rhymes. To appreciate the original beauty of this lyrical instrument, one must read the *Cantate à trois voix* or such a passage as this from the *Odes* which renews the music of French poetry:

Les mots que j'emploie,
Ce sont les mots de tous les jours, et ce ne sont point les mêmes!
Vous ne trouverez point de rimes dans mes vers ni aucun sortilège. Ce sont vos phrases mêmes. Pas aucune de vos phrases que je ne sache reprendre!
Ces fleurs sont vos fleurs et vous dites que vous ne les reconnaissez pas.
Et ces pieds sont vos pieds, mais voici que je marche sur la mer et que je foule les eaux de la mer en triomphe!

(*La Muse qui est la Grâce.*)

Nothing is more essentially Claudelian than this fusion of realism and of transfigured reality. It is all very well for Apollinaire to talk, in a preface, of "super-realism." It is in Claudel's work that the thing will be found. The most harmonious example of it is his admirable *Connaissance de l'Est*, whether he describes at length landscapes of ocean or of gardens, whether he designs a minute, delicate print ("let this piece of silk be fixed for me by its four corners . . ."), whether he paints the banyan by the sole evocation of its dragging effort, whether he suggests immensity in a phrase—"the night is so calm it seems to me salted"—or whether, apropos of a pagoda, he compels us to hear the music in the silence: "At each angle of each roof, the architect has attached a bell, and the globule of the knocker hangs without. Pinioned syllable, it is of each heaven the imperceptible voice, and the unheard sound is suspended there like a drop." In the dramas, this realism readily becomes aggressive. Claudel wishes to remain the robust Champenois whose feet are planted solidly upon the earth. The "look which pierces to the core" in *La Ville*, the strong vulgarities in *L'Echange*, the talk of the workmen in *L'Annonce*, the familiar details concerning the life of the saints of whom he sings are so many proofs of his taste for popular imagery. These realistic touches serve him for the vigorous individualization of characters like Marthe and Violaine. They intensify the tragic irony in these words of M. Badilon's:

Moi l'imbécile, le gros homme chargé de matière et de pèchés!
Me voici à qui Dieu a donné ministère sur les hommes et sur les anges, c'est à ces mains rouges qu'il a remis le pouvoir de lier et de délier!

(*L'Otage.*)

Such realism is associated with a comic sense which proves the perfect health of this art too long reputed hermetic. There is scarcely a play by Claudel which does not contain some enormous joke dissipating for an instant the exceptional tension of the drama, and the complex Toussaint Turelure would suffice to demonstrate his verve as a

lyrical humorist. For Claudel remains a poet even when it pleases him to invent the "satyrical drama" of Æschylus which he has been unable to translate. With *Protée* he invites us to a Naxos which will be supposed, "for the convenience of the action," to be situated between Crete and Egypt. There Proteus, "a poor sixth-rate god," feeds his seals with fish (both being "replaceable on the stage by the spectator's imagination and the music"). There unfold the adventures of Menelaus torn between two Helens, he eloping with the false one, the true having sold her rights to the nymph Brindosier for a few push-buttons. Péguy's judgment on this "summer poem" deserves to be quoted: "What shows how far Claudel is saturated with Hellenism, is the deviations he brings to it. His deviations from Hellenism are in the line of Hellenism." This tone of lyrical buffoonery, this creative unconstraint, will be found in the delicious fantasy of *L'ours et la Lune.*

The majority of Claudel's works are presented in the dramatic form. Though he is the author of ten dramas, several critics still deny him the title of dramatic poet. Doubtless the discussion will be enlightened if we forget all that has been written on this subject. Claudel's plays present certain characteristics the first of which is that a general idea underlies each. *Tête d'or* is the "drama of the possession of the earth." *La Ville* opposes exchange to communion, Christian communion making it possible to "establish laws" which, infringed, involve men in their ruin, this being the lesson of *L'Echange.* The trilogy has as its subject, in addition to the conflict between human and divine love, "the breaking down of the barriers, the meeting of the races." It is possible, if one wishes to simplify, to find in all these plays the same idea: modern society errs in destroying the great Catholic unity at the pleasure of individual caprices; but does this conception of Claudel's encroach upon the life of his characters and upon the development of the action? No, for Claudel possesses a very sure craftsmanship. To see how he has formed himself, it will suffice to compare the two versions of *La Ville,* where the abstract phantoms have been replaced by such definite individuals or again the character of Anne Vercors in *La Jeune Fille Violaine* and in *L'Annonce.* The third act of *L'Annonce* which brought to the theatre the perilous spectacle of a miracle is perfectly constructed from a dramatic point of view. Likewise the first act of *La Père humilié* ending in Pensée's avowal: "I am blind." The theatre can show no scene more poignant than those in which Louis Laine is called upon to choose between two women, in which Badillon bends Sygne to the divine will, in which the two Turlures stand face to face; and if a more restrained emotion be desired, the meeting of the Emperor and his mother among the dead or that of Violaine and

Jacques in the garden are as satisfying for the heart as for the mind. These characters are very living men and women. Their struggles are moving. Claudel in fact is endowed with a rare artistic impartiality. The monsters which he should perhaps hate—which he certainly detests as a Christian—he does not overwhelm as a poet. Has he not written, in *Partage de Midi*, one of the finest love-dramas in our language?

"The end of art," says Claudel in the *Introduction*, "is the search for ensembles." The great lyric intermezzi at the climax of the dramas are the visible manifestation of this exaltation of the heroes above the crisis in which they are involved, of this Claudelian "super-realism." They abruptly unveil the tie which attaches man to humanity. All the characters in one of his dramas form a concert. Each drama is a verset of the world. The virulent satire of *L'Irréductible*, the eloquence of *Aux morts des armées de la République*, the overflowing lyricism of the beginning of *La Muse qui est la grâce*, the sobriety of the "Mésa, I am Ysé, it is I" or of the "I do not hate you" are the accords of a unique music mingling the dense notes of *L'Ode à Dante* and the suaveness of the *Cantate* whose three voices alternate, interlace, separate, prolong themselves in recitatives and canticles:

D'un tel art inséré qu'on n'y trouve rien qui commence et aucune fin
(*Cantate.*)

and of which nothing can be quoted because it would be necessary to transcribe the four pages of the *Cantique de l'Ombre*. Assuredly this universal music, hitherto unheard in French poetry, has puzzled ill-attuned ears; but those who believe in the unity of poetry and of music, those who have been obliged to demand of the ancient Greeks or the modern English the lyrical nourishment refused them by the oratorical traditions of the French classics, Romantics and Parnassians, will not remain insensible to the most grandiose lyrical transport of our literature:

O grammarien dans mes vers! Ne cherche point le chemin, cherche le centre! Mesure, comprends l'espace compris entre ces feux solitaires!
Que je ne sache point ce que je dis! Que je sois une note en travail! Que je sois anéanti dans mon mouvement! (*Rien que la petite pression de la main pour gouverner.*)
Que je maintienne mon poids comme une lourde étoile à travers l'hymne fourmillante!

(*Les Muses.*)

Paul Claudel's work has been developing regularly for thirty years. Nothing is more paradoxical in appearance than the career of Paul

Valéry. He, too, began about 1890, producing, in ten years, two slender prose works and a few poems. Mallarmé's influence was evident in verses like

L'ombre de quelque page éparse d'aucun livre

(*Valvins*)

or the second tercets of the sonnets *Baignée* and *Au bois dormant.* The end of *Féerie:*

La chair confuse des mollets roses commence
A frémir, si d'un cri le diamant fatal
Fêle d'un fil de jour toute la fable immense . . .

was not unworthy of the master Valéry had chosen. Fame seemed assured to the young poet who at once attained the abstract firmness of

Traverse sans retard ses invincibles trames,
Epuise l'infini de l'effort impuissant,
Et débarasse-toi d'un désordre de drames
Qu'engendrent sur ton lit les monstres de ton sang!

(*Semiramis.*)

and the sensual suggestion of that *Episode* like the mutilated marble suddenly revealed in an excavation:

Une feuille meurt sur ses épaules humides,
Une goutte tombe de sa feuille sur l'eau,
Et le pied pur s'épeure comme un bel oiseau
Ivre d'ombre . . .

Now these attempts which seem to us successful "rather promptly conducted their author to a sincere and lasting separation from poetry." For fifteen years Valéry kept silent. He broke this silence in 1917 with *La jeune Parque,* expressly characterized by him as an "exercise." Four years later, the review *La Connaissance* having organized a referendum to designate the foremost poet of the present day, the majority of the votes went to Valéry.

"These thoughts are not mysterious. It might have been written quite abstractly that the most general group of our transformations, which includes all sensations, all ideas, all judgments, everything that manifests itself within or without, admits an invariable factor." This passage from *Note et Digressions* encourages us to attempt a study of Paul Valéry which shall not separate the prose writer and the poet, the philosopher and the lyric, the Symbolist and the Classicist recognizable in him. We shall strive to follow in its detail the progress of the mind

which, in a dense and perfect work, has most powerfully stated the problem of the Mind.

His work does indeed involve an invariable factor. Certain verses from *Semiramis:*

> *Repas de ma puissance, intelligible orgie . . .*
> *Ce calme éloignement d'évènements secrets . . .*

would not shock in *La jeune Parque* this verse from which:

> *Quand (au velours du souffle envolé l'or des lampes),*

would not surprise in *L'Album le Vers anciens.* Even at the most Racinian pitch of his inspiration Valéry will never deny the lesson of pure poetry given by Mallarmé. The ear seizes subtle correspondences between *La jeune Parque* and *Hérodiade.* An examination of his *Après-Midi d'un faune,* of the different states of that *Narcisse* to which he is brought back by a need of confronting himself, will show the presence of this invariable. If all Valéry's heroes, whether they be called Teste, Psyché or the Serpent, write MYSELF in capitals (and the "no" of the Platane is yet another affirmation of an ego), it is because "the pure ego . . . dwells eternally in our senses," it is because the highest contemplation of the mind is a narcissism which transcends egoism. When all the other idols are broken, there remains at least precision. "My own enthusiasm spoils it for me," he writes of his Teste in 1896. "Enthusiasm is not the mental state of a writer," repeats the *Note* of 1919. The same pitiless intellectuality and lucidity dictates his reply to the vote which proclaims him first among his peers: "I feel all the value of this honour . . . I feel its danger more distinctly still." The *Introduction à la Méthode de Léonard de Vinci* showed him as early as 1894 in search of the "universal man" whom he believes possible because he believes in the unity of the mind, in a relation dominating the vain opposition of the arts and the sciences: "From this point of view the ornamental conception is to the particular arts what mathematics is to the other sciences." M. Teste's room is the "any habitation whatsoever, analogous to the any point whatsoever of the theorems—and perhaps as useful." Twenty-five years later he will write that the problem "presented us by our fellow-men, which consists simply in the possibility of other intelligences, in the plurality of the singular, is . . . comparable to the physical problem of relativity." Echoing the "I abandon myself to the delightful gait . . . " of *L'Amateur des Poèmes* responds the effort of Eupalinos "when he elaborated the emotions and the vibrations of the soul of the future contemplator of his work." The invariable with Valéry

is the capacity of maintaining himself at the unique point where all the powers of the mind, scientific or artistic, passive or creative, are united. In the *Note* added, in 1919 to the *Introduction* of 1894, he sums up his first conception of Leonardo: "I felt that this master of his means, this possessor of drawing, of images, of arithmetic, had found the central attitude starting from which the enterprises of knowledge and the operations of art are equally possible." Now he himself declares this idea which already seems to us so original, "too immediate a thought—a thought without value—a thought infinitely prevalent—and a thought good to say but not to write."

We shall not undertake to defend the *Introduction* against the *Note*. We shall simply read them in their order. Let us but remember, as we set out, this statement in *La crise de l'Esprit:* "The things of the world interest me only in their relation to the intellect. Bacon said this intellect is an *idol*. I agree, but I have never found a better." The *Introduction* describes the duel between the diversity of things and the unity of the mind which "strives to form a decisive image." Diversity is an obstacle which is destroyed little by little and things finally classify themselves "according to the facility or the difficulty." All speculations have as their aim an extension of continuity. The great man who is "a complete system in himself," who has the value of "a physical hypothesis," possesses the secret of "recovering relations between things whose law of continuity escapes us." Now one of these geniuses, Leonardo, has proclaimed: "It is easy to become universal." Genius is logical, in no way mysterious: "Where others were incapable of seeing, he had looked, combined and did no more than read in his mind."

The *Soirée avec M. Teste* lends these ideas a dramatic form. One must read, with the *Introduction*, the sonnet *Un feu distinct* . . . before coming to this extraordinary work which is neither a tale nor a prose poem. Nor can it be reduced to a Poe-like descent into the dregs of thought. It differs as much from Mallarmé's *Crayonné au théâtre* as a Cézanne differs from a Monet. The *Soirée* is the first revelation of that "desperate distinctness" which we shall often find in Valéry. If its psychology is exceptional, that is because he can legitimately base himself upon truths which would be lies for anyone else: "One falls asleep over any idea whatsoever" when one possesses the discipline of an Edmond Teste. Hero and narrator have pierced the illusion: "Every great man is tainted with an error . . . Genius is easy, fortune is easy, divinity is easy. I simply want to say I know how that is conceivable." Incarnated in a Teste who will die without having avowed his greatness in exchange for the public *pourboire*,

anonymity is superior to the glory of brilliant individuals, "a little less solid": "He was the being absorbed in his variation, he who becomes his system, he who gives himself entirely to the terrifying discipline of the free mind and who makes his joys kill his joys, the weakest by the strongest—the gentlest, the temporal, that of the moment and of the hour begun, by the fundamental—by the hope of the fundamental." Such a mastery of thought, an inaction so comprehensive, disgusts Teste "with the formless games of glory." He has every audacity and the method Valéry speaks of in the *Etudes*, "offering every mental weakness its own picture through consciousness. Thus (or contrarily?) pain itself pales, for an instant, when looked in the face, if that be possible." Teste who has "killed the puppet," Teste who "erases the quick," who "combats everything, save the suffering of his body, beyond a certain grandeur"—Teste would triumph if he finally found "a mechanical sieve."

In summarizing Teste we have not left Valéry. He covered the same road to find the same door closed: "If I began to throw the dice on paper, I brought but the words witnessing the impotence of thought: genius, mystery, profound . . . I replied so promptly with my pitiless sentences to my nascent propositions that the sum of my exchanges, at each instant, was nothing." Enamoured of rigour, he already understood that "absolute poetry can proceed by exceptional marvels only." It is "the rarest and most improbable thing remarked in literature." He had not discovered a mechanical sieve. He had indeed formulated, as early as the *Introduction*, the idea of ornamental conception which neglects the significance and the ordinary usages of objects characterized and known to keep only their order and their reactions so as to obtain, by these means, its effect which is to awaken emotions and images. This support was, however, too weak, too lacking in precision. Art offered him only "such long, rude constraints that they absorb all the natural joy of being a poet, leaving nothing at last but the pride of never being satisfied." Teste said: "Finding is nothing. What is hard is to assimilate what one finds." Valéry became silent.

When he spoke anew it was because years "had been disposed to ripen his inventions and to turn them into his instincts." In the *Note* of 1919 he still says no to fame, he continues to defend "man's integrity" and attacks the Pascal of the two minds with the violence of an intellectual equal. He even draws us farther into "the solitude and the desperate distinctness," demonstrating how our profoundest thought remains superficial, how "man's character is conscientiousness and that of consciousness a perpetual exhaustion." He ends then

in the nihilism of these two propositions: "All things substitute themselves for each other—may not this be the definition of things? . . . The intelligent man must finally reduce himself knowingly to an indefinite refusal to be anything whatsoever." That however is not the last word. Claudel had won his liberty in the slavery of a faith. Valéry, if he continues to keep as his idol "the obstinate Rigour" of Leonardo, finally discovers that "the instituted rigour, a positive liberty, is possible," that of the mathematician or of the poet both of whom work upon relations. If it is not the absolute, it is at least generralized relativity: "Any image whatsoever is perhaps but a beginning of ourselves." For the artist the mechanical sieve will be "the well-placed constraints" which he opposes to the fire of his inspiration. The writer will feel himself at the same time "source, engineer and constraints." He must create a "language-machine." Valéry's poetic art thus rejuvenates classicism: "Between the emotion or the initial intention and these endings: forgetfulness, disorder, vagueness—fatal outlets of thought—it is his business to introduce the contrarieties he has created, in order that, interposed, they may dispute with purely transitive nature interior phenomena, a little renewable action and independent existence." Poetry, liberated by the invention of these constraints, gushes forth anew:

Honneur des hommes, Saint Langage,
Discours prophétique et paré,
Belles chaînes en qui s'engage
Le dieu dans la chair égaré.

(*La Pythie.*)

The *Note* already insisted upon the necessity of collaborating with chance, not without interpreting it, for "our reply to our genius is at times better than its attack." In a *Préface à Adonis*, Valéry has again spoken of these chains, of that classical language-machine to which he submits his inspiration: "I do not say the 'pathless delight' is not the principle and the very aim of the art of the poets. . . . I have merely wished to make it understood that the obligatory numbers, the rhymes, the fixed forms, all this arbitrary element once for all adopted and opposed to ourselves, have a certain cleanly, philosophic beauty . . . Learned poetry is a profoundly sceptical art." Perhaps this last saying is, three centuries of the human mind later, the exact counterpart of Malherbe's on the skittles-player. . . .

Shall we be reproached because we have, speaking of a poet, pursued so long in his prose the traces of that conflict between Apollo and Dionysos which is one of the faces of his thought? Do not so

many quotations, however, establish that Valéry is also an admirable prose-writer? His obstinate rigour inspires him at times with haughty formulas in the style of Suarès: "That means making oneself more foolish than one has ever been; but foolish by necessity, foolish by *raison d'Etat!*" See, however, with what pure elegance he immediately advances his thought: "There is, perhaps, no sharper, more intimate or profounder temptation than that of self-repudiation. Each day is jealous of the days, and it is its duty to be so. Thought denies desperately having been stronger. The light of the moment does not wish to illuminate in the past moments brighter than itself." The same *Note* contains an unforgettable portrait: "But Leonardo, from research to research, makes himself very simply the always more admirable riding-master of his own nature. He trains his thoughts indefinitely, exercises his looks, develops his acts . . . He takes to pieces and reassembles himself, tightens up the correspondence of his will with his powers, advances his reasoning into the arts and preserves his grace." Thus does Valéry. He has recovered that "transparent mode of discoursing" which he praises in Racine. In the gaiety of *Adonis* and in the subtle depth of *Eupalinos*, to the very end, this prose preserves its grace.

And then this study of the progress of his mind was the indispensable introduction to the reading of his poems. The end of *L'Abeille* acquires its full meaning for those alone who have first measured, not its precious perfection but the disquietude of this genius. The drama of inspiration is ever present in *La Pythie* or *Le Narcisse*. There is more. Under its significant motto from the *Pythiques*, the *Cimetière Marin*—which should be considered to date Valéry's masterpiece —is a meditation precisely parallel to that of *Note et Digressions*. He contemplates the perpetual flux:

Comme le fruit se fond en jouissance,
Comme en délice il change son absence
Dans une bouche où sa forme se meurt,
Je hume ici ma future fumée,
Et le ciel chante à l'âme consumée
Le changement des rives en rumeur.

The same anxious will for the absolute:

O pour moi seul, à moi seul, en moi-même,
Auprès d'un cœur, aux sources du poème,
Entre le vide et l'évènement pur,
J'attends l'écho de ma grandeur interne . . .

The same disdain for the facility which expresses itself, the same stiffening:

La vie est vaste, étant ivre d'absence,
Et l'amertune est douce, et l'esprit clair.

The same consciousness of the nihilism by which man poisons the beauty of nature:

Tête complète et parfait diadème,
Je suis en toi le secret changement.

And after the same negation of glory:

Maigre immortalité noire et dorée . . .

the same "desperate distinctness":

Zénon! Cruel Zénon! Zénon d'Elée!
M'as-tu percé de cette flèche ailée
Qui vibre, vole et qui ne vole pas?

There is nothing, first and last—

Le vent se lève! . . . Il faut tenter de vivre . . .

which does not show, to speak the language of the *Note*, "the struggle of the ordinary truths" resuming its course after the moment of "substantial attention" during which the poet's mind measured the world. The same drama—that of the inner life—gives its meaning to *La jeune Parque* which was originally to have been called *Psyché*.

This thought, so tormented, has wished to express itself within the limits of the most rigorous classicism. Paul Valéry represents, in contemporary art, the supreme form, that which chooses. There is no common measure between his classicism and Moréas' classicism which savours of artifice and is limited to a unique sentiment. It might readily be said of Moréas compared to him what he said of the difference between Chénier and his model, La Fontaine: "His art seems slighter, less pure and less mysterious." Valéry is directly related to Malherbe, Racine, Baudelaire and Mallarmé. He revives the great lyric forms of the seventeenth century, notably the ten-line strophe of Malherbe's odes and of Racine's *Cantiques spirituels* (seven syllables in *Palme* and *Aurore*, eight in *La Pythie* and *Le Serpent*). An example will show how he handles this instrument:

Sur le mur, son ombre démente
Où domine un démon majeur,
Parmi l'odorante tourmente

Prodigue un fantôme nageur,
De qui la transe colossale
Rompant les aplombs de la salle
Si la folle tarde à hennir,
Mime de noirs enthousiasmes,
Hâte les dieux, presse les spasmes
De s'achever dans l'avenir!

(*La Pythie.*)

Master of the pure Racinian perfection, he reinstates in it the Mallarméan density:

Sonnant dans l'âme un creux toujours futur . . .
(*Cimitière*).

He confines in a closely wrought stanza a lyricism in which the abstract vision doubles the violence of the imagination:

Flagelle-toi! . . . Parais l'impatient martyr
Qui soi-même s'écorche,
Et dispute à la flamme impuissante à partir
Ses retours vers la torche.

(*Au Platane.*)

To the caresses of *L'Insinuant*, to the insinuations of *La Caresse*, to the marmorean firmness of *Le Cantique des Colonnes*, he adds the infinite suggestion of *Les Grenades:*

Cette lumineuse rupture
Fait rêver une âme que j'eus
De sa secrète architecture

(*Les Grenades*),

a tercet which would appear mysterious had we not, to explain it, the words which Valéry lends Socrates in *Eupalinos:* "I told you that I was born several, and that I died but one . . . A quantity of Socrateses were born with me, from whom little by little the Socrates destined to the magistrates and to the hemlock detached himself." "And what have become of all the others?" "Ideas. They have remained in the state of ideas."

Gloire du long désir, Idées . . .

thus sang the *Prose pour des Esseintes.* Mallarmé transmitted this problem of ideas to Valéry who sought its solution even in the solitudes of the *Introduction* and of *La Soirée. Eupalinos* and *L'Ame et la Danse* are perhaps the prelude to the great work of poetic philosophy Valéry owes us. Now this Socratic dialogue is entirely

orientated towards grace. Already, in the *Introduction*, Valéry had emphasized the importance of the architect among artists. Here the architect Euphalinos rises higher than Socrates blinded by the problem of knowledge, higher than Plato even and the "very admirable Stephanos" who saw but the "too simple and too pure" beauty of Ideas. Euphalinos declares "there are no details in the execution." In advance, "he elaborates the emotions and the vibrations of the soul of the future contemplator of his work." We find here again all the ideas expressed elsewhere but reared as the columns of a new edifice. For if Valéry had already maintained that art creates its spectator, he now adds that art also creates the artist: "By dint of constructing, I honestly believe I constructed myself," cries Eupalinos and he adds: "Where the passer-by sees merely an elegant chapel, I have put the memory of a bright day in my life . . . This delicate temple is the mathematical image of a daughter of Corinth whom I loved happily . . . And when you spoke of music apropos of my temple, it was a divine analogy which visited you." Going beyond the Baudelaire of the *Correspondances*, Valéry explores the psychology of the creative spirit, the self-imposed restraints, the delay he imparts to the Ideas to "obtain from what is going to be that it shall satisfy, with all the vigour of its novelty, the reasonable exigencies of what has been." For the artist must attain, the space of a lightning-flash, that summit "being free." This is what Valéry musically suggested in *Aurore:*

Leur toile spirituelle
Je la brise, et vais cherchant
Dans ma forêt sensuelle
Les oracles de mon chant.

He said it, precisely, through the mouth of Eupalinos: "O Phedra, when I compose a dwelling . . . I will tell you this strange thing that it seems to me my body is involved" and he sings a hymn to this body which recalls to itself the soul "like the anchor, to itself, the ship." Now, by one of the favours the gods grant poets, the capital phrase of this passage in which Valéry has really "chained an analysis to an ecstasy," takes the tone and the rhythm of four Claudelian *versets:* "But this body and this spirit, this presence invincibly actual, and this creative absence which dispute the being and which must finally be harmonized; but this finite and this infinite which we bring, each according to his nature, must at present unite in a well-ordered construction."

We have traversed the valley of the shadow of death, passed beyond

the kingdom of "desperate distinctness" and the time when, according to Eupalinos, "my vast reveries ended in an unlimited impotence," in that "mystery of feebleness" which Valéry describes at the beginning of his notes on the subject of *Euréka.* Socrates, enlightened by his "regrets," proclaims further that "the greatest liberty springs from the greatest rigour," opposes constructing to knowing, dreams he is anti-Socrates, a constructor, a creator of *acts,* rendering a supreme homage to the artist who is "the contrary of indefinite time." How many centuries is the poet of the perfect strophes of the *Serpent* or of the *Cimetière marin* worth? For he is the dialectician who, in *L'Ame et la Danse,* shows in reason "the faculty of our soul for understanding nothing of our body," bringing us into collision again with that "murderous lucidity" whence one escapes only by "desperate bounds out of one's form." He is the lookout for those minutes of inspiration when the "report" which demanded years of research reveals itself.

Le temps d'un sein nu
Entre deux chemises.

(*Le Sylphe.*)

He is, finally, the initiator of a new certitude, simple as the life of Descartes whose motto to *La Soirée* reminds us that it was *simplicissima,* simple with the complex simplicity conscious and sensual, which abstracts from moving language the definitive marvels of pure poetry.

Cessez, sombres esprits, cet ouvrage anxieux,
Qui se fait dans l'âme qui veille;
Ne cherchez pas en vous, n'allez surprendre aux cieux
Le malheur d'être une merveille:
Trouvez dans la fontaine un corps délicieux.

CHAPTER IX

THE CONTEMPORARY DRAMA

WHEREAS, in the number and the vigour of its poets, the contemporary epoch can compete with the most glorious periods of our literary history, the stage suffers from a vice which many observers have pointed out and against which the generous efforts of Lugné-Poe, Copeau and Gémier have been directed. The divorce between the stage and high thinking seems to become more and more accentuated. Against the attitude of a part of the public which demands from the stage satisfaction as direct as that derived from moving pictures, the true dramatic writers react with plays which interest an élite alone. The rest construct standardized plays on popular patterns which disgust with the theatre those who sought in it something more than an evening's entertainment; and we see authors, managers, actors and spectators blaming each other mutually because "there is something rotten in the state of Denmark."

1. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAMA

La Nouvelle Idole had marked a happy balance in Curel's dramatic work. This was destroyed by *La Fille sauvage*. The failure of that play on the stage and the interest it arouses when read are not contradictory. In this wild girl caught in a bear-trap, brought to France and initiated into the most complex civilization, Curel wished to depict the evolution of humanity which, starting from barbarism, passes beyond religion and rationalism to end in moral anarchy. It is easy to understand the difficulty of packing such an epitome of history into an evening. Sarcey treated the drama as a philosophical dialogue, invoking Plato and Renan. In this "succession of lectures," he found however "the general instinct and superior mastery of the dramatist." *La Fille sauvage* renders visible the paradox of an art which seems, in the reading, to require the life of the stage and to demand, on the stage, the meditative pauses of reading.

Le Coup d'aile is a purely symbolical drama. It contains a single hero, the flag, materializing glory or the Fatherland according to the men and women who regard it. Everything else is sacrificed to it,

even the psychology of the characters. *Le Coup d'aile* has the value of an austere exercise and connects itself curiously with that vision of moral anarchy to which Curel's last plays were to bring new testimony. When, after an eight years' silence, he produced *La Danse devant le miroir*, one recognized the theme of *L'Armour brode;* but one was also obliged to admit that the author had deprived it of its last possible hope, that he had, according to his very expressive formula, "transformed the exaggerated dialogue of the lovers into a sung waltz of two egotisms." The original idea, that love lies, was simple and could let love subsist. The subject of *La Danse*, that every lover is but a living mirror, is the negation of love. It has not to destroy it since it does not exist. In the two dramas love is "a vaudeville with the ideal as prompter." Charles and Paul both kill themselves so that the mirror may "keep their fair image"; but the first dies as the hero of an ideal tragedy, the second as a dupe of love's comedy.

L'Ame en folie brings these savage "*Marivaudages*" back to humility. Justin, a retired philosopher, serves the author as spokesman to show how moral anarchy and savagery meet, to evoke the deer and the does apropos of two lovers busily engaged on the first floor of his house. There is in this play a harshness which contrasts with the lyricism of *La Danse*, an evident scorn for the means, whether they be material, like the skeleton utilized for the heart-attack, or psychological, such as the character of Blanche so many of whose features are lifelike yet who, as a whole, appears unreal.

La Comédie du génie crowns this spectacle of anarchy staged by Curel beginning with *La Fille sauvage*. That play, in which the analysis is sometimes so confidential, disdains the ordinary theatrical precautions. With a mixture of eloquence and cruel irony it describes the life of a playwright from the awakening of creative impulse to the supreme doubts as to his genius. To render this synthesis complete, Curel recoils from no improbability; but in the very drama where he seems most openly to set the laws of the theatre at defiance, he renders dramatic art the most ardent homage. He has pitilessly denounced the comedy of civilization, the comedy of love and the comedy of genius, but he proclaims only the more strongly on this account his faith in glory, in "that tryst to the tenderness of the peoples given on a tomb." Thus in Curel self-examination too takes the dramatic form. Perhaps his obstinate effort will succeed in creating a new genre more flexible than the conventional drama, more animated than the abstract dialogue, in which this intelligence eager, at the same time, for liberty and for discipline, for life and for depth, will at length find satisfaction. It is possible that *Terre inhumaine* which had, in

1922–23, a triumphal success, may appear, in spite of its somewhat melodramatic manner, a new step in that direction.

This transmutation of ideas into living characters and of ideal conflicts into human dramas which renders Curel's works irreducible to a series of philosophical dialogues is found again in Marie Lenéru. The three plays published by her testify to the rarest courage—that of an unflinching gaze and of a writer daring to say all she has conceived. It is a dangerous quality for the author whom it exposes to every misconstruction. *Les Affranchis* was accused of Nietzscheism and of anti-Nietzscheism. It has been claimed that, in *Le Redoutable*, she had proposed an apology for treason. The effort to see clearly which inspired *La Paix* has been taxed with inconsiderate pessimism. The praise and the blame which greeted her present, in another form, the fundamental problem of her work—the observation of a strange discord between the thoughts and the actions of our contemporaries. The end of *Les Affranchis:* "Are we heroes or cowards?" agrees with that of *Le Redoutable:* "There are no monsters, only monstrous acts." This conception of a conflict between the intelligence and the offensive returns of instinct necessitates exceptional characters. The atmosphere of *Les Affranchis* quickly becomes unbreathable for an average creature like Mlle. Duret who obeys a physical need as much as her master's lesson in giving herself to a young student. The real drama is an ascetic combat between Philippe, Hélène and the abbess who evolve on a ground of fraternal abstractions. *Le Redoutable* is a failure, in spite of affecting scenes, because the heroes have not the intellectual strength which would give the conflict what the author claimed to derive from it. Too many natural motives explain the treason at Malta, too many improbabilities are required to explain and justify the Admiral's sudden changes. The menace, in a single act, of the two contrary dénouements, condemnation and acquittal, seems an artifice to exhaust Laurence's psychology. Marie Lenéru's attempt deserved all our respect. It showed above all how restrained is the domain of the drama of abstract ideas the moment the playwright leaves the great symbolical crises in which Curel had maintained it. As to Marie Lenéru's exceptional situation, this appears in all its pitiful grandeur in the *Journal* of which the Barrèsian *Saint-Just* forms a chapter. "This makeshift for a will, to enable myself to die with less anger," shows through what sufferings, what boredom, what "coma of awaiting" her mind imposed upon her body the soaring energy she demanded of the Revolutionary hero. Better than in any of her plays the splendour of the pathos of ideas

reveals itself in this confession of a woman eager for everything in life and forced to stiffen herself proudly in her solitude: "In the long run it makes one terribly proud to be able to do without one's fellow-men!"

The appeal of pride is precisely the solicitation Edouard Schneider has wished to reject. As early as *Raisons du Cœur* he refused to accept "a mandarin's title" and glorified mystic intuition, loosening the Catholic tie to owe exclusive allegiance thereafter to the eternal Church. Always in quest of a religious peace—which he was able to find momentarily only in the fresh evocation of *Heures bénédictines*—his plays and his novels mark a loyal evolution. Thence their response to each other. At the end of the drama *Les Mages* where the Catholicism which stands for order and apostolic Catholicism are confronted, the abbé who represents "the tyranny of love" abdicated; but his defeat was given as "the finest of victories." The novel *L'Immaculée* rejected this tyranny, showing that, according to a sentence in *Ariane ma sœur*, "more than one mystic glorified by the Church vowed to the service of God the measured use of his human charms." The here of *Ariane* plunges into a fierce sensuality until the day when his wife's illness reveals to him "the profound reality of love and the notion of the human person"; but once this woman is dead, nothing is left him, deprived of the bitter consolation of believing himself "responsible," other than revolt against God. *Le Dieu d'Argile*, played in 1921, offers, after this "mysticism of the flesh," a sort of counter-*Enemy of the People* where the impassioned claim to the rights of the heart breaks the proud philosophy. This assertion of reasons superior to reason constitutes the unity of Schneider's work.

It leaves it also an aspect, if not dogmatic (for he denies concluding like an intellectualist) at least a little theoretical. The first two acts of *Le Dieu d'Argile* remain very cold and his Elizabeth is somewhat symbolical. In this play, in fact, just as implicitly in *Ariane* and quite explicitly in *Les Mages* and *L'Immaculée* (where the whole action consists in transferring this title from a religious to a lay heroine), the drama is always the drama of the disciple, of a passive being; and there is at times in Schneider's style a certain softness which harmonizes with the indecision of his typical characters. Perhaps in his work the conflicts are more living than the beings. He brings to their painting, in any event, a scrupulous honesty, an elevation of thought which permits him to treat the vastest subjects and, even where he does not carry conviction, always to merit the respect due to noble attempts.

The psychological drama has sought elsewhere the air it lacked. Edmund Sée has continued Porto-Riche. His theatrical works, *L'Indiscret*, *La Brebis*, *Les Miettes*, show the same delicate and sober analytical talent which inspires his novel, *Un cousin d'Alsace*, or that poetical novel, *Notre Amour*, which demands of verse merely its ductile quality and, in more than one place, recalls the manner of *Bonheur manqué*. For the psychological drama always keeps close to the novel whose freedom it even seems often to envy. Louis Artus, after *Cœur de Moineau*, abandoned the theatre and appealed to the novel to exhibit, in *La Maison du Fou*, five poignant cases of Ambrosian mysticism—to invite us, in *La Maison du Sage*, to partake his "harsh joy" at the downfall of the dwelling of a false sage whose mediocrity unfortunately transforms this drama of influence which might have given a counter-*Immoraliste* into a tale of Manichæan obsession—to mingle in *Le Vin de ta Vigne* "the realities of St. Leonard's chronicles and the prophetic divination of the drunken monk who dictated to me." *Le Quatuor en fa dièse* by Gabriel Marcel, a philosopher according to whom the life of the conscience alone deserves the name of life, and *Le Maître de son cœur* by Paul Raynal have shown that the Porte-Riche tradition is not extinct. From so many efforts will perhaps emerge the original formula capable of fitting the new problems of the heart into a Racinian frame.

H. R. Lenormand's dramas inaugurate an interesting effort to renovate the psychological theatre under the influence of the Russian novelists and of the *Grand Guignol*. *Terres chaudes* plays brutally upon the strings of terror and pity in an exotic setting, but also raises the problem of the just and the unjust which transcends the colonial incident just as the anguish of *Simoun* transcends the purely atmospheric drama. *Les Possédés* forms, if one wishes, a pathological gallery. It renews, with a singular vigour, the theme of the artist and society and makes this "sacred egotism" pay its penalty. Ibsen has been evoked in connection with *Poussière*, Dostoïevsky in connection with *Les Ratés*. Henry Lenormand differs from the first through a harsh clearness, from the second through an incisive pessimism. He likes to cut his dramas up into small pictures in which every stroke counts. This method is very well fitted for the lamentable theatrical road-company described in *Les Ratés*. He has applied it again in that drama, *Le temps est un songe*, the title of which reminds us that the hallucinated frenzy of the action here has, as its point of departure, a philosophical idea inordinately expanded by a halo of reveries, "for everything is phantoms and reflection of phantoms." In such plays Lenormand has proved his originality; but they all keep an air of im-

perious *tours de force* and those who have confidence in his great dramatic talent await the moment when this will, so well-tempered, shall undergo the ordeal of human pity, really devoting itself to the new ideas which *Le Mangeur de rêves* still confines itself too exclusively to employing for effect.

2. THE PLAY

The "play" was the fashionable form for the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. Theoretically, the merit of this form, accessible equally to comic and to tragic inspiration, is its flexibility in rendering all life impartially. As a matter of fact, this vague denomination has above all permitted the reconciliation of the most divers influences—Dumas' moralizing satire, Augier's bourgeois good sense, Becque's ferocity, Sardou's clever craftsmanship.

Maurice Donnay has pursued his brilliant career and tackled the vastest subjects. *L'Autre Danger* tells the story of a human conflict. *Le Retour de Jérusalem* studies the Jewish problem in contemporary society. In collaboration with Lucien Descaves, the energetic novelist of *Sous-offs*, he has also written, in addition to *La Clairière*, that *Oiseaux de Passage* in which a racial conflict is considered. Why do these plays, ardently discussed on their appearance, seem to us, in spite of their unquestionable loyalty, to have become so cold? Donnay's proverbial nonchalance, his abuse of episodical characters, do not prevent the scenes between Claire and Freydières, between Judith and her lover, between Vera and her fiancé, being solidly constructed. In the dialogues where a mother and her daughter dispute the heart of the same man, where love is wrecked on the revelation of the profound differences between a Jewess and an Aryan, between a young French bourgeois and a Russian Nihilist, Donnay is capable of sacrificing the easy witticisms which made the success of his plays and give them to-day their antiquated air; but, even in these passages, emotion is a postulate rather than a reality. Led by a skilful hand to the threshold of greatness, we do not cross it. *Les Eclaireuses* remains a game as much as *Le Ménage de Molière*.

Henri Lavedan, who was occasionally tedious in the light vein and who is uniformly so in the moral vein, seemed twice to emerge from this mediocrity. Played by A. Le Baroy who literally incarnated his rôle, *Le Marquis de Priola*, the portrait of a modern Don Juan, produced a considerable theatrical, if not psychological, effect. *Le Duel*, cleverly utilizing a contemporary incident, gave almost the impression of a *pièce d'idées*. Lavedan profited by this indulgence and did not risk his reputation again in such dangerous essays.

Alfred Capus enjoyed a great reputation as a wit—French declare some, Parisian others, *boulevardier* whisper a few. His *Au Jour le jour*, in *Le Figaro*, his novels, of which *Qui perd gagne* may be noted, and his plays, the best examples of which are *La Veine* and *Notre Jeunesse*, have popularized his philosophy which was the mocking optimism of an unindulgent observer, persuaded that "everything comes out right." His comedies were dialogues on the human surface. His wisdom rehabilitated sound sense in ingenious sallies and whenever he was forced into his last trenches, he declared our epoch to be "cordial and habitable." When he emerged from this temperate zone, he succeeded better in such fantasies as *Brignol et sa Fille* or *La Petite Fonctionnaire* than in the drama *L'Aventurier*. The charm of his conversation kept alive the fiction that he was a theatrical author. Irony changed camps the day when Alfred Capus believed it his duty to take the world and himself seriously.

Before becoming one of the most renowned playwrights of his epoch, Henry Bataille had published a volume of verse, *Le Beau Voyage*.

Et vienne ce beau soir que j'évoque à mon gré,
Où nous caresserons nos lèvres endormies . . .
Ce soir-là, ce soir-là, je saurai bien des choses . . .
Je ne te plaindrai plus de n'avoir pas de roses . . .
Je comprendrai la joie du phalène qui meurt . . .
Alors nous éteindrons la lampe avec douceur . . .

(*L'Adieu.*)

This end of a poem is as it were a concentrated essence of Bataille's easy and perhaps spontaneous emotion, lack of precision in the thought, inexactitude in the expression, unbearable embellishment of every reality by an æstheticism the pretensions of which to depth ill dissimulate its emptiness. Had this religion of false art asserted itself only in the tedious rhapsodies of *Le Phalène* or the ridiculous declamations of *La Quadrature de l'amour*—

Cet égorgeur qui tint cent peuples dans sa poigne
Et s'acharna sur tous les soleils tour à tour,
J'atteste qu'il avait les mains moites d'amour—

two unsuccessful books might be neglected. Unfortunately their one fault is to reveal more sincerely the weakness of a work in which Bataille has held the mirror up, not to nature, but to theatricalism. The contrast is truly comic between his prefaces and the plays following them. To take his word for it, he had been shocking the public, struggling for the advent of an "exact lyricism." By "exact lyricism"

should be understood that the action passes in settings which flatter every form of snobbishness—Parisian apartments furnished by fashionable dealers, department-store Algeria, tourist Sicily, a comic-opera Brittany. The characters match the cushions and hangings, bringing with them, in *La Femme nue*, *Les Flambeaux* and *Le Phalène*, a sickening odour of the last society scandals, offering the spectators of *Le Scandale* an echo of that Bernstein brutality which they had appeared to love, presenting in *Les Flambeaux* an image of science and philosophy exactly on the level of this audience and leaving it, on emerging from that incredible melodrama, the illusion of having spent some three hours in the confidence of Henri Poincaré. As soon as they touch on ideas these heroes speak the language of their creator. Thence the verbiage of *La Vierge folle* and of *Les Sœurs d'amour*, spoiling the human interest of the drama of Grace de Plassans' pride, inspiring the comic symbolism of Thyra de Marliew. With Bataille Romanticism is regenerated by rascality—witness the extravagant comedy in which *L'Enfant de l'amour* retrieves an unfaithful lover for his mother. The dramatist deigns to take an interest in his heroines only when they have reached a certain degree of physical or moral decadence. To render the drama of *Maman Colibri* possible, Irène must have complicated her passion with a perverse maternal sentiment and her son have kissed her shoulder like a lover.

Lyricism of this exactitude will consist in the reading of a farewell letter to the sound of one of Chopin's nocturnes which the author, ashamed of so much artificiality, declares to be "stereotyped and passionate" in his stage directions but the performance of which leaves him all the benefit in the case of sensitive souls. It is moreover just to recognize that such a duplicity is not common with him. Generally a sort of loyalty impels him to go to the limit of bad taste. In the first version of *Poliche*, a touchingly simple dénouement won forgiveness for the monotonous depiction of one of those equivocal circles which Bataille deems representative. More cruel for himself than any of his critics had ever been, he felt obliged to touch up this last act in order to introduce a scene which seemed to him daring. For there is no writer who has oftener recalled the need for audacity and who has so constantly dodged the most necessary audacity, the truth, of which Thyra's nakedness is, alas, but a caricature.

Henry Bernstein has attempted various forms: ironical comedy in *Le Détour*, character study in *Le Secret* where a malicious maniac destroys the happiness of those about her, the ample synthesis of *Israël* rather quickly exhausted; but his reputation is based upon that series of frenzied dramas, *La Rafale*, *Le Voleur*, *Samson*, *L'Assaut*, which

gave a powerful shock to the nerves of the charmed public. The subjects he treated permitted every paroxysm: a politician brought to bay by the pack of his enemies, a mistress obliged to sell herself in order to pay the gambling debts of her paramour, a financier reduced to compassing his own ruin in order to drag his wife's lover down with him. All this rabble of the criminal courts danced a romantic round about the golden calf. Grave critics treated these bugbears for big children as supermen and Bernstein has achieved the success merited by his skilful dosing of barbarism and literature.

There remain to be named, for the sake of completeness, the writers who, without any ambition to renovate dramatic art, have followed their career in the theatre as they would have pursued any other liberal profession. Abel Hermant, author of *Chaine anglaise*, quickly understood that *Souvenirs du vicomte de Courpière* was much better than its theatrical adaptation and returned to the libertine novel in which he excels. Francis de Croisset, in *Le Cœur dispose* and *Chérubin*, has made himself the vulgarizer of Musset with a constancy which involves the abnegation of all originality. Romain Coolus has provoked smiles with *Petite Peste* and paints the grapple of *Cœur à Cœur* with the same good grace. In the form of romantic comedy—from *Le Bonheur sous la main* to *L'Idée de Françoise*—Paul Gavault remained uniformly amiable. Gustave Guiches, a novelist of provincial life in *Céleste Prudhomat*, brought to the Comédie Française, in *Chacun sa vie*, the vision of the modern realities compatible with the tradition of a subsidized theatre. The same praise applies to *Les Marionnettes* by Pierre Wolf who, before entering this temple, was one of the most brilliant authors of the Boulevard and disputed with the witty Pierre Veber the privilege of stimulating slack digestions by means of that pitiable drama of pity of which *Le Lys* and *Le Ruisseau* offer excellent examples. Finally, since we are drawing up a list of caterers, we shall be pardoned for naming Lucien Népoty who believed himself authorized, by the success of his melodramatic *Petits*, to collaborate with the Shakespeare of *The Merchant of Venice;* Henri Kistemaeckers who, from *L'Instinct* to *L'Occident*, remained a very skilful manufacturer and Jacques Richepin of whom literary history will perhaps remember the interpreters.

Albert Guinon's theories elicited an approving article from Pierre Gilbert. *Décadence* which studies the same problem as *Le Retour de Jérusalem, Son Père* and *Le Bonheur* does not mark a very perceptible advance on Henri Becque's work; but "Becque's successor" is a flattering title which was given also to Fernand Vandérem in connection with *Cher Maître*, the diversion of a critic habitually too perspicacious to

be blinded in his own case. The same quality may be wished Jean Sarment whose *Couronne de carton* had moved, thanks to awkwardnesses which seemed guarantees of sincerity. His second play, *Le Pêcheur d'ombres*, showed him to possess a genius for "fake" scarcely inferior to Henri Bataille's. The decadence of German music after Wagner has never been better revealed than in the infallible orchestral acrobatics of Richard Strauss.

3. SOCIAL SATIRE

There are few writers as tiresome and as diverting as Octave Mirbeau—tiresome to read, but so diverting on reflection! Mirbeau's work accomplishes as a matter of fact, the miracle of clothing with the most outworn Romantic ornaments a naturalistic philosophy the meditations of which invariably end in platitude. Beginning with *Sébastien Roch*, dedicated to Edmond de Goncourt, he extolled "the sublime beauty of the ugly." *Le Jardin des supplices*, inspired by this thought, that "Love and Death are identical," pretends to imitate, in a garden borrowed from the Paradon, the art of the Chinese executioner who "extracts from the human flesh all its prodigies of suffering." *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* expresses "the sadness and the comedy of being a man—a sadness which makes noble souls laugh, comedy which makes them weep." *Les 21 Jours d'un neurasthenique* proves that "men are everywhere the same" and *Dingo* sings the praises of a dog which, in spite of some vices borrowed from man, has kept its precious canine superiority. Everything in Mirbeau is enormous, and first of all the puerility. Generous, ever ready to write the article or the preface which would launch some unknown genius, which would denounce some social injustice, his enthusiasm was often mistaken. In his books, monotonous examples of the novel of odds and ends, he relieves himself of a scorn for modern society which would be scathing could it be taken quite seriously. They are receptacles into which he casts pell-mell his rancours as an anti-clerical, as a Dreyfusist and as a pamphleteer. His love of opposition carries him, in *La 628–E8*, to the point of a eulogy of Germany which the Prussian "squirearchy" must have relished. The results he obtains have always this paradoxical character. If he gives well-known names to his heroes, no one accepts these caricatures. If he portrays a Père Roch or an Abbé Jules, the author's truculence alone is appreciated. If he talks about himself, the reader yawns. He dreams of writing "pages of murder and blood," pages which will exhale "a strong stench of rottenness," and succeeds in attracting only the amateurs of pure pornography. He goes lion-hunting and brings back merely a little vermin. Excel-

lent when he narrates, in his natural voice, some rough Breton buffoonery, he usually wearies by the outbursts of a uniform violence. Huysmans had embalmed dead Naturalism in his decadent style. Mirbeau rejects this artifice and gives back the corpse its odour.

Yet this man has composed the one play of our epoch which stands comparison with Becque's. Perhaps he sought in the theatrical form an opportunity to discipline his impetuosity. *Les Mauvais Bergers* reveals a schematic Mirbeau who imagines a revolutionary workman, a wavering employer and a young idealistic bourgeois to pit them against each other in a brutal, mystic strike. *Le Foyer*, on the contrary, in spite of Thadée Natanson's collaboration, is written in the same ink as his novels. This virulent, painful caricature which in vain caused a sensation, shows above all his inability to confine his fierce and infantile misanthropy in a living action. To compare Armand Biron with Isidore Lechat is useful only to emphasize the extraordinary relief of *Les Affaires sont les affaires.*

This comedy offers a fine artistic situation. Its exposition is admirable. Two scenes suffice to evoke the setting in which the action is to take place and to paint soberly two characters one of whom, by his revolt, will provoke the crisis. Isidore Lechat enters. Mirbeau's habitual excess threatens to compromise this beginning. In his protagonist he has accumulated everything he detests in contemporary society: bourgeois cruelty, garrulous egotism, belief in material facts, scorn for artistic truth, opportunist socialism; but the necessity for rendering this symbolical character convincing on the stage has compelled Mirbeau to depict the business man in full strife. There he is great. The interview with the engineers reveals his power and, in the principal scene with the Marquis, he achieves quite naturally a lyric breadth which would not be unworthy of Toussaint Tourelure. The author conducts his drama with implacable determination towards the double catastrophe. His impenitent romanticism unleashes the fatalities of modern life. Of all the images of fright he so frantically sought none surpasses the tragic final scene in which Isidore Lechat, whose daughter has just run away and his son been killed, foils the two partners who wanted to take advantage of a father's grief to outdo the business man of whom Mirbeau has drawn this grandiose and enduring portrait.

Emile Fabre's titles are a program: *L'Argent, La Vie publique, Les Ventres dorés, La Maison d'argile, Les Vainqueurs, Les Sauterelles.* He describes the names and customs of financiers and politicians in France and in the colonies in carefully documented, solidly constructed plays whose collective aim is to give a Balzac-like picture of public life

in our epoch. It is, however, almost inevitable that a play which touches on a social problem of the present moment will awake its passions and be taken for a satire or an apology. Thus it is that the two modern tragedies by Paul-Hyacinthe Loyson, *Les Ames ennemies* and *L'Apôtre*, were discussed contradictorily with *L'Otage* by Gabriel Trarieux and *Le Tribun* by Paul Bourget. Whence are explained the little tempests raised by Georges Bourdon with *Les Chaines* and Charles Méré with *La Captive.*

Social satire, too, has provided Saint-Georges de Bouhélier with the inspiration for the only one of his works which is not unbearable, *Le Carnaval des enfants.* Undoubtedly, for those who know the entire work of the prophet of Naturism, the blending of vulgarity and symbolism in *Le Carnaval* recalls the childish conception of *La Tragédie royale* and heralds the platitudes of *La Vie d'une femme.* At least we escape here the infatuated prattle which, on leaving *L'Histoire de Lucie* and *Des Passions de l'amour*, makes us reread *La Vie de Marianne*, Pascal and Maeterlinck parodied by Bouhélier with naïve unconsciousness. Then too in *Le Carnaval*, Christ does not appear—that Christ to whom *La Romance de l'homme* likens Rousseau:

O rêveur! A l'égal du doux fils de Marie
Ta parabole est belle . . .

and whose passion the Olympian *Œdipe* transfers to the king of Thebes —that Christ who fills with tedium a tragedy the preface of which is a document. In it Bouhélier repudiates the extremities to which his "premises" might have led him and adds: "I have purposely chastened the speech of my Christ." For this art which seeks aspirations and shuns ideas has a sure instinct for impropriety. His bad taste is infallible whether he celebrates pell-mell, among the *poètes damnés*, Verlaine, Rimbaud and Mendès, or whether, with the facility of a Rostand, he parades the Baudelaireanism of a disciple of Zola. Reading proves that *Le Carnaval* does not differ widely from Bouhélier's other works; but on the stage, the pair of aunts and a dramatic scene between the heroine and her daughter assure the play a success somewhat comparable to that of Charpentier's *Louise.*

4. COMEDY

Tristan Bernard cannot reproach his epoch with having underrated him. Certain critics have gone so far as to compare him to Courteline—an interesting *rapprochement* if it leads to recognition of the fact that Courteline starts from an observation and Tristan Bernard

from a situation. His comedy often affects a mechanical precision. An interpreter ignorant of every foreign language, a thief seized with a Cornelian scruple, servants who give orders to their masters—these reversals of the usual order provide the subjects for *L'Anglais tel qu'on le parle*, *Daisy* and *On nâit esclave* (in collaboration with Jean Schlumberger). The silhouettes sketched by Tristan Bernard are delightful. *Monsieur Codomat* and *Triplepatte* (in collaboration with André Godferneaux) prove him not less successful in more serious character study. To analysis he prefers the shafts of a witty good humour which makes the charm of *Le Danseur inconnu* and *Le Petit Café*. His clever nonchalance permits him, at need, to rise to the dramatic level without appearing ridiculous. He excels in awakening and maintaining a complacent confidence in his hearers, and his age has given him credit for so much wit he will probably remain insolvent before posterity.

It is customary, when seeking ancestors for Robert de Flers and Gaston Armand de Caillavet, to evoke Meilhac and Halévy. Was it to accentuate this resemblance that, in *Primerose*, they intended to write their *Abbé Constantin?* Doubtless their work, from *Chonchette* to *Le Bois sacré*, is a picture of the Third Republic, recalling, by its caricatural turn, the picture of the Second Empire left us by their predecessors in the field of satiric wit; but they have not received the whole Meilhac-Halévy legacy, leaving Lemaître and Donnay the task of academicizing *La Belle Hélène in Mariage de Télémaque*. Their excess was always cleverly tempered, as for instance that *Habit vert* in which, while mocking the Academy of 1890, they subtly presented their candidacy for that of 1912. Their most accomplished work is *Le Roi* in which their easy verve, associated with the caustic harshness of Emmanuel Arène, sacrificed less to easy brio. In this play which has alternately Beaumarchais' mordancy and the unconstraint of an annual *revue*, they defined, with an elegant good grace, the limits separating indignation and amusement.

Flers' and Cavaillet's charm was this reserve maintained by them even in the sentimentality of *L'Amour veille*. Sacha Guitry understood there was room for a comedy of indiscretion in which the plot is merely an excuse for exhibiting the actor. His work falls into two periods. During the former, in *Le Veilleur de nuit* and *La Prise de berg-op-zoom*, he staged Sacha Guitry, with his nonchalant air, his amusing sallies, his faith in universal weakness. During the second, with *Pasteur* and *Bérenger*, he staged Lucien Guitry and the desire natural to every great comedian to incarnate men of great disinterestedness or rascality. The result was to disguise Sacha Guitry as a philosopher and Lucien Guitry as a kind of Machiavellian Talleyrand.

From these two theses Sacha Guitry, in *Mon Père avait raison*, derived the synthesis. He had been accused of monstrous egotism in the manner of Montaigne. He has victoriously demonstrated that he possessed a highly developed and brand-new family feeling.

Was comedy then reduced to this dilemma: either an economic comedy in which action is replaced by verbal wit or else the vaudeville in which Alexandre Bisson and Georges Feydeau, author of *Le Contrôleur des wagons-lits* and of *On purge bébé* are past-masters and have displayed a broad humour superior to more pretentious efforts? All those who believed in the vivifying virtues of farce heartily applauded *Le Cocu magnifique* by Fernand Crommelynck, a play whose merit was not merely the evocation of a *milieu*. F. Fourson and F. Wickeler had proved that the Belgium of *Le Mariage de Mlle. Beulemans* could be merely a pretext for facile jokes and it has been seen, in *La Fraude* by L. Fallens, to serve as the setting for a commonplace melodrama. Crommelynck's strength came from the fact that, in painting Flanders, he revived Flemish inspiration. His excessive, improbable inventions, his imagination overflowing with buffoonery and lyricism, contained in a colossal caricature a human reality. Without expatiating upon jealousy he gave a picture of the jealous maniac far more authentically poetic than that miserable *Amants puérils* (performed after *Le Cocu* but written before it) which must be speedily forgotten in order to see in *Le Cocu* something more than a happy beginning; and perhaps Emile Mazaud, after imitating Courteline in *La Folle Journée* and Molière in *Dardamelle*, will consent to play fairly, stripping his farces of every sentimental afterthought.

5. VERSE DRAMA AND PLAYS BY POETS

Some still write tragedies on the classical model. Alfred Poizat and Alfred Mortier rank among those courageous authors who seem to consult their own taste rather than the public's. Two great examples, Moréas' *Iphigénie* and Verhaeren's *Hélène de Sparte*, have shown that works of this kind, whatever their poetic interest when read, hardly stand the test of other than exceptional performances.

The romantic Banville formula is more susceptible of success. Edmond Rostand exploited it to the end of his life. All the defects we have indicated in the author of *Cyrano* reappeared in *L'Aiglon* and *Chantecler*. A deplorable lack of taste made him mistake his puerile prattle for the abundance of genius, his painful ingenuity for profound symbolism and his rhymed acrobatics for lyric poetry. Like his cock which personifies Tartarin alone among French heroes, he believed he had a broad culture because he mixed up all the languages,

Depuis la langue d'oc, jusqu'à la langue toc (*Chantecler.*)

and imagined he created a sun when he sang the death of verbal romanticism. It would be cruel to insist upon the nothingness of these great failures. The desire for such ambitious constructions turned Rostand aside from his natural path, from artificial comedy in the style of *Les Romanesques* and of *Cyrano.* In addition to Miguel Zamacoïs who wrote *Les Bouffons* and *La Fleur mystérieuse* with studied affectation, Edmond Rostand's legacy was garnered by his wife, Rosemond Gérard, and his son, who collaborated in *Un Bon Petit Diable.* Maurice Rostand has, furthermore, in *Le Cercueil de cristal* and *La Gloire,* variously utilized the paternal memory while, at the same time, revealing himself, in *Le pilori,* a d'Annunzio-like disciple of Romain Rolland.

Maurice Magré has, from *Velléda* to *La Mort enchainée,* shown an inexhaustible fecundity in proving it possible to reverse Racine's precept and make nothing out of something. The result obtained by him through a pretentious pomp is achieved by François Porché through an affectation of simplicity. *Les Butors et la Finette, La Jeune Fille aux joues roses* and *La Dauphine* are the work of a shamefaced Rostand. René Fauchois' romantic impetuosity has been employed, with fine sincerity, against Racine and on behalf of Strindberg. His *Beethoven* and his *Rivoli* have not yet declared a very personal technique. As for André Rivoire whose poetry and prose show the same trivial delicacy, he remains uniformly superficial, whether he invents a subject (*Il etait une bergère*), or whether he shares its paternity with Shakespeare (*Juliette et Roméo*), with Lucien Besnard (*Mon ami Teddy*) or with Yves Mirande (*Pour vivre heureux*). Scarcely anyone but André Picard, author of *L'Ange gardien,* is seen to dispute with him this prize for deadly facility.

Attempts to establish a real poetic drama have, however, not lacked these last twenty years. Maeterlinck has continued his work. Maurice de Faramond has, in *La Noblesse de la terre* and *Le Mauvais Grain,* attempted to create "a rustic tragedy." André Gide's two plays and Viélé-Griffin's *Phocas le jardinier* have been played, as have Paul Fort's teeming *Louis XI* and Alexander Arnoux's pretty fairy melodrama, *Huon de Bordeaux.* Three dramas by Claudel, *L'Echange, L'Annonce* and *L'Otage* have had performances. Jules Romains' *L'Armee dans la ville* and *Cromedyre* have appeared on the stage. Before *L'Œuvre des athlètes,* Duhamel had been revealed as the author of *La Lumière;* and it is impossible to omit from this review the splendid homage which Gabriel d'Annunzio paid the French language in writing *Le*

Martyre de Saint Sebastien. Now of these plays, produced by daring or admiring managers, applauded for a few evenings by an enthusiastic band, not one has long remained on the stage; and the success of *L'Oiseau bleu*, a work exceptional through its fairy character, unfortunately proves nothing to the contrary.

Henri Ghéon deserves to have his name permanently associated with this attempt at a revival. The studies on the poetic drama collected by him in *Nos Directions* form a solid plea at the same time as a statement of the problem. He has understood that, at a moment when Claude Debussy and the Russians were re-creating the musical drama and the ballet, a renaissance of the poetic drama was needed; but his first attempts, *Le Pain*, a popular "tragedy," and *L'Eau-de-vie*, a "rustic tragedy," hardly realized their plan for the "exaltation of the real." The return to Catholicism described at length in *Le Témoignage d'un converti* did not discipline his generous, confused inspiration. Drawing upon the lives of the saints, he has written *Les Trois Miracles de Sainte Cécile*, *Le Pendu dépendu* and *Le Pauvre sous l'escalier*, in which he mingles mysticism and farce in the manner of mediæval mysteries. In spite of such noble intentions, an ironic fate has willed that Ghéon, defender of free verse, should escape none of the temptations of idle loquacity to which the choice of this instrument exposes him and that, an apostle of the poetic drama, he should present, in *Le Pauvre*, so tiresome an image of it as to discourage the staunchest faith.

And yet, to mention but these and recalling that a Christian drama is not necessarily a settlement-school entertainment, there are Paul Claudel's plays. It would be vain to conceal that these have not attained the wide theatrical diffusion to which they are entitled. It is too soon to ascertain the reasons for this misunderstanding between the public and certain of the greatest dramatic animators of our age, those who should be authorized to repeat, with Léchy Elberon:

"They listen to me and they think what I say. They look at me and I enter their soul as if it were an empty house."

(*L'Echange.*)

CHAPTER X

THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL

THE novel continues to enjoy an incomparable favour with the public. A temporary triumph, insinuate some, which would not withstand a great poetic renaissance analogous to Romanticism or to Symbolism; but this prediction perhaps merely manifests a survival of faith in noble and less noble forms. The novel seems indeed to have won, in the nineteenth century, its patents of nobility (if nobility there be). Rendered flexible by the various experiments of Balzac, Stendhal and Flaubert, of the Naturalists and of their adversaries, enriched by foreign influences from Meredith to Dostoïevski, it offers contemporary writers the most sensitive instrument for the expression of an original way of thinking. Furthermore we have seen many poets and dramatists resort to it to communicate more fully with their readers. Others have, from the beginning, found it so rich in possibilities that they have devoted to it their whole talent. All schools having been abolished, never did it better justify the Stendhalian definition, and we shall not endeavour to group the novelists otherwise than by indicating the roads along which they have borne their mirror and the various pictures it has reflected.

1. THE STORY-TELLERS

And first of all we must place apart in this multitude those whose principal concern has been to polish the mirror they were to hold up to nature. However different may be the romantic Villiers, the erudite Schwob and the sceptical Anatole France, they have this trait in common that the way of giving is even better than what they give. They are at the pinnacle of the stylists and the story-tellers.

Jules Lemaître was successively a distinguished professor, a distinguished poet, a distinguished critic, a distinguished dramatist and a distinguished politician. In no domain did he long hold first rank. Several times he seemed on the point of achieving greatness; but of his master, Renan, he retained but that scepticism which paralyses the creative power of the novelist of *Les Rois* and soon limits the

sympathy of the critic of *Les Contemporains*. The irony which opened to Anatole France a world to explore and to conquer was for him but the vestment of the humanist. His wisdom remained that of a cultivated bourgeois who does not abandon his prejudices; but, in his best moments, he added to them the mocking delicacy of a peasant from the valley of the Loir. This permitted him to appear further removed from Coppée and Sarcey than he really was. Moreover he recognized his limitations and strove to cultivate this garden of delicate taste rather than long risk the surprises of creation.

His books of tales, *Myrrha*, the two series of *En marge des vieux livres*, completed by *La Vieillesse d'Hélène*, contain the best of Lemaître. He does not undertake to evoke the great events of legend and of history but aimably prolongs tales sufficiently classic for his talent, hostile to adventure, to feel at ease. In this style, *Réveil d'ombres* and *La Sirène* are excellent. *L'Innocente Diplomatie d'Hélène* and *Thersite* show the two dangers, platitude or emphasis, which threaten him as soon as fantasy aspires to turn into psychology. Thus Lemaître usually prefers to derive from these old stories a lesson of amused scepticism—political dilettantism from *L'Ecole des rois*, religious dilettantism from *Le Premier Mouvement* which delights in comparing the two opposite careers of *Un Critique* and *Un Idéaliste* or in resuscitating the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus for the sake of an ironic vision. He loves rehabilitations and revenges, invents a sequel to the story of Griselda and corrects fairy tales; but this smile ill conceals a disenchantment which manifests itself all the more as his political illusions take flight and as old age approaches. *La Vieillesse d'Hélène* exhales regret for ephemeral love with slightly wearying monotony. We should prefer a less obstinately precise cause for disquietude and, after this grimacing procession, we are glad to reread the picturesque tales which compose Gebhart's *Au Son des cloches*. Where Lemaître once more takes the lead is in those stories which, under a transparent disguise, are studies of literary history. *Mère et Fille* brings out maternal grief in the gay Sévigné. The *Journal du duc de Burgogne* is an analysis of Fénelon to which Lemaître afterwards adds but a big useless book. In such stories his charming prose, clever at perfuming itself with discreet archaisms, works wonders. There he finds that indulgent detachment which was without doubt his highest ambition.

Jérôme and Jean Tharaud have carried the art of the story-teller to the point where the story is sufficient unto itself without needing any adornment. Authors of a dozen books they have written but two

novels. Furthermore it is common knowledge what their *Dingley* owes to Kipling and they assure us that *La Maîtresse servante* is a true tale. The brothers Tharaud are admirable story-tellers. With an almost equal felicity they have touched on several important problems of contemporary history: English imperialism, French nationalism, our colonial expansion in North Africa, the Turkish defeat in the Balkans, Jewish influence in Eastern Europe. They have introduced a new form into literature: reporting. How cleverly they have done this is seen in *La Bataille à Scutari d'Albanie* where two episodes—a visit to Montenegro and another to Mount Athos—suffice them to evoke the end of five centuries of Islamic domination. *Marrakech dans les palmes* is the triumph of this virtuosity. Two landscapes seized in the course of a motor tour to situate the tales told them by the officers of the Protectorate—with this meagre material they have written a book full of animation. They have applied the same reportorial method to the past. *La Tragédie de Ravaillac* is a model of historic journalism.

The secret of this power is an infallible sureness of craftsmanship. Even when they attack the richest subject, the Tharauds excel in making their selection. They do not seek to say everything. They isolate the essential episode, tell it with a powerful sobriety, firmly indicating all the consequences that can be deduced from it. They never suffer an encroachment. In *Un Royaume de Dieu* they depict only the little Jewish community of Schwarzé Témé, lost in a corner of immense Russia. The abundance of their information is self-disciplined in an impeccable tale strongly underscored with a quiet humour; and yet, once the book is closed, what reader can escape the impression that he has seen passing, in this crowded Ghetto, some of the Jews who will soon be the masters of Russia, perhaps even of the world?

This talent for composition, equally apparent in the broad fresco of *A l'ombre de la croix* and in the brutal brevity of *Les Hobereaux*, the Tharauds are capable of subordinating to a picturesque effect as well as to a psychological development. A comparison between the two *Dingleys* with their strictly opposite dénouements shows how far this suppleness extends. Their style possesses precisely the same qualities. When they do not survey it, it recalls rather spontaneously the sentence structure dear to every admirer of their master, Barrès: "Near their rusty wells, in their inner courts, I hear far better than in the sham mediæval setting the murmur made by history about the antique citadel." This sentence is found in *Quand Israël est roi*, which is dedicated to Barrès and which is moreover one of the Tharauds' most impassioned books. Ordinarily they have a firmer grip

on themselves and their prose realizes the paradox of an impersonal perfection. Perhaps the collaboration of two minds pitiless for each other explains this result which is to let the eye grasp its object through colourless glass the better to respect the colours of what is described—a deliberate style, stript of adjectives, subduing the brilliance of the foreign words incorporated into it so as, literally, to photograph life.

A tiresome perfection sometimes. Certain critics have thought that this form of the Tharauds', which proscribes originality with its dangers of deformation, announced the beginning of a new academicism; and one welcomes with a malicious joy, towards the end of *La Maîtresse servante*, this sentence which closes a Barrès-like cadence: "Mariette has often made me think of these captive springs. They are there faithful, abundant, always ready for domestic uses, and in them is seen the sky." This pleasure however leads fairly soon to a more important discovery. It is a mistake to believe that in assuming this mask of historians, the Tharauds have ceased to be novelists. They are not so absent from their work as they have wished or at least as they have wished it to be believed. For them, the Limousin of *La Maîtresse servante* is no more a convenient background than Angoulême so like the soul of Ravaillac. They did not write an official eulogy in their *Déroulède*. The two Dingleys permit us to measure the disappointment caused them by Kipling. *La Fête arabe* is a special plea. Still more convincing is a recent experiment. To the Jewish problem which preoccupied them as early as *Bar-Cochebas* (1907), they have recently devoted four books. Those who were surprised by the anti-Semitism of *Quand Israël est roi* and by the denunciation of the eternal Ahasuerus, of the "race of charlatans and dupes" always ready to trouble the peace of the world in order to realize the Messianic dream, had been wrong to believe in the Tharaud's coldness; and it is salutary that this talent so robust and in appearance so disinterested should sometimes disclose, behind its disciplined lucidity, a human passion.

The readers won for Han Ryner by his title "Prince of Storytellers" must have been disappointed if they looked in his work for tales of breathless excitement; but they have not regretted it if they were sensitive to the revelation of a noble thought. Han Ryner who has devoted one book to the life of Jesus (*Le Cinquième Evangile*) and another to that of Pythagoras (*Le Fils du Silence*) is nourished with all the philosophic and mystic wisdom of the past. Like the Rosnys for whom he has expressed his admiration he has, in *La*

Tour des peuples, painted a vast prehistoric fresco. In *Les Pacifiques*, reviving the sunken Atlantis, he has imagined his island of Utopia, stigmatized the baseness of modern life and embodied his ideal. He has placed at the service of the free, clear Love which he preaches, an ingenious dialectic with manifold poetical inventions. Nowhere has he done it more happily than in *Les Paraboles cyniques* with the philosopher Psychodorus, disciple of Diogenes, as spokesman: "Whether it be to affirm his practical certitudes, or to sing the hovering of the dreams which to-morrow the clergy and the universities will disfigure and paralyse into systems, the wise man employs willingly . . . the parable." Certainly Han Ryner knows the goal to which he aspires and which is to render "more conscious and more voluntary God's sacrifice in dying for the life of the worlds, the sacrifice of the worlds dying for the life of God"; but he means to keep for his thought its full scope: "I never reproach a thought with having wings and being a dream." He denounces fanaticisms as so many forms of slavery to a narrow formula, "for no word is a vase wide or deep enough to contain the whole truth." He does not fear contradictions if they conform to the supple variety of life. Thus he prefers to clothe his practical certitudes and his metaphysical anticipations in the changing tissues of the parable. Here Han Ryner joins the brotherhood of the poets haunted with the desire expressed by Baudelaire "for a poetic prose, musical, rhythmless and without rhyme, sufficiently flexible and sufficiently broken to adapt itself to the lyrical movements of the soul, to the waves of reverie, to the sudden stabs of conscience."

2. THE ARTISTIC NOVEL

In the preface to *Les Vacances d'un jeune homme sage* Henri de Régnier explains that his vocation as a novelist who "narrates certain ways of living, either in times past or in our own times," is due to "a personal taste for finding amusement in events and in persons." He might add he has yielded to this bent only as a poet in whose eyes imaginary creatures are of no more importance than the petals of a red rose falling in a few splashes of blood. Thus he will not be offended if we note that his great qualities as a novelist appear to better advantage in the *trèfle rouge* formed by the three stories in *Les Amants singuliers* than in the long-drawn-out narrative of *La Pécheresse*. Yet in this last book evocation of the past retains a little of the nonchalant charm which seduced the readers of *La Double Maîtresse;* but his "modern novels" derive their value above all from the details, as seen in *L'Amphisbène* where his painting of love distinct from pleasure misses the perfection which showed them united in *L'Amour*

et le Plaisir, "*histoire galante*," the pearl of the volume *Couleur du temps* which, with *Tiburce et ses Amis*, shows also a Régnier distinctly ill at ease in the symbolical allegories with Urien and Monelle. *Romaine Mirmault* begins in a Paris of restaurants and automobiles and ends in fantastic melodrama where the only trace of his delicate taste is the precaution he has taken to exile to Rome a heroine out of place in so regrettable a dénouement. Must it be said that in *La Peur de l'amour* the two protagonists interest us less than the description of that Venice for which Henri de Régnier reserves all the tender melancholy Versailles was not sufficient to slake?

In order to speak of the present—an epoch upon which time has not yet imposed a "style"—Régnier is forced to fall back upon accessories. At best, he can resort to the artifice of *Le Passé vivant* or revive, as in *Les Vacances*, "some of the little events which, at the age of fifteen, move us most deeply and which, later, make us smile as one smiles at the past, with regret and melancholy." When this past is really the past, when the souls, the objects and the words which evoke them are all of the same date, then Henri de Régnier manifests his mastery. This is the case of *Le Bon Plaisir*, a chronicle of the reign of Louis XIV completed by an ingenious pastiche. In it a whole epoch lives again with its pageant of war, its court intrigues, its understanding of pleasure. Yet this tale claims to be merely the story of Monsieur de Pocancy "who played no other rôle in his century than that of having lived, as we live in ours—a rôle which runs the risk of being of little importance to times or to men to come"—a melancholy sentence where reappears the poet who, in his most recent collection of verse, confesses:

J'augure d'aujourd'hui ce que sera demain
Et je suis fatigué d'être ce que nous sommes,
Sachant ce que fut vivre et combien vivre est vain,
Quand on n'est rien de plus que l'un d'entre les hommes.
(*Vestigia Flammæ.*)

His verse, in which the Hellenic tradition incorporated the Symbolist conquests, has sung of love. His prose, entirely orientated towards classic models, has been readier to speak of pleasure. The same haughty melancholy inspires the liquid stanzas and the sinuous periods. *Vestigia Flammæ* which once more evokes Versailles and Venice, which, in poems of an equal perfection, recalls the memory of the first *Odelettes*, gives us the ultimate conclusion of the poet and of the novelist in the complex emotion of *Le Départ* and in this portrait of a happiness without illusion:

Aussi bien que les pleurs le rire fait des rides.
Ne dis jamais: Encore, et dis plûtot: Assez . . .
Le Bonheur est un Dieu qui marche les mains vides
Et regarde la vie avec des yeux baissés.

The leading ideas of Pierre Louÿs have been set forth in the preface to his *Aphrodite*. At the beginning of this novel, the story of a courtesan who is original enough not to be converted, Louÿs recalls the beauty of "the high Greek sensuality," the rights of physical love and of the human body. He asserts that the morality of the race which built the Acropolis "has remained that of all great minds." One of his best stories, *Une Volupté nouvelle*, declares that humanity has not advanced a step since Democritus, Parmenides and Pythagoras. Ugly and barbarous, the modern world would be pitilessly condemned had it not invented the cigarette. Thus Pierre Louÿs has endeavoured to revive, in imagination at any rate, the happy antique epochs. He has done it as a scholar, with such success that the *Chansons de Bilitis*, which revive the love adventures of a courtesan of the sixth century before our era in Pamphilia, Mytilene and Cyprus, were accepted by certain authorities as the translation they purported to be. He has done it above all as a poet, the poet of *Astarté* or of these lines for which Régnier may feel a friendly envy:

Rappelez-vous qu'un soir nous vécûmes ensemble
L'heure unique où les dieux accordent, un instant,
A la tête qui penche, à l'épaule qui tremble,
L'esprit pur de la vie en fuite avec le temps.

(*L'Apogée.*)

The poet is everywhere present in Louÿ's work. His is, in *Bilitis*, the smiling grace of the Bucolics, the sombre ardour of the Elegies, the incisive picturesqueness of the Epigrams. It is he who fashions the variegated fresco of *Aphrodite*, orders the movements of the characters all the way to the grandiose ascent of Chrysis, sheds the pious pity of Timon over cruel dénouements, clothes his narrative in a supple musical prose with recurring Wagnerian leitmotifs; and, if he does not conduct his heroine to the feet of a monk, makes her nevertheless "daughter of Jerusalem" in order to unite the harmonies of the two great sources of lyricism.

"Sensuality is the condition, mysterious but necessary and creative, of intellectual development." So says the preface to *Aphrodite*. *La Femme et le Pantin* brings the negative confirmation of this assertion. If Mateo is but a plaything for Concha, it is because of his cowardice. He does not know how to utilize sensuality for his intellectual de-

velopment. Why has he not meditated the lesson of Démétrios? This latter, too, falls, for an instant, into the error that his two lives must be separated. Thus he becomes the slave of Chyrsis and commits three crimes for her; but he soon masters himself sufficiently to refuse the beautiful courtesan the love and the blows she implores with an equal fervour. He simply makes use of her exquisite body for one of his statues. Passion is slavery (the first title of *Aphrodite* proclaimed it). One must free oneself from it to equal the gods and to create. For the artist's creation is superior to everything, Louÿs will repeat in *L'Homme de pourpre.* Hence his haughty detachment, different enough, whatever he may say, from the antique irony. Louÿs does not disown the modern world until he has borrowed its most refined anarchy. In the last part of the book, certain phrases of Démétrios lack very visibly the accompaniment of a puff of scented cigarette smoke.

Thus *Les Aventures du roi Pausole* carry us out of time, to a country the name of which evokes the Tryphè of the apologue which prefaced *Aphrodite.* This book tells of the triumph of the pretty Giglio over the Puritan Taxis. It praises the naked voluptuousness which throws off even the sheets beneath which Régnier conceals pleasure; and if, meditating the author's counsel, one has been able "never exactly to take Fantasy for the Dream, or Tryphème for Utopia, or King Pausolus for the perfect Being," one will then understand how, in all his works, Louÿs has surpassed erotic Alexandrianism through the smile of a lucid intelligence and a passionate worship of beauty.

Pierre Mille's fecundity risks obscuring the esteem he deserves. A great traveller, he is also an explorer of souls and, as he says in the preface to *Le Monarque*, aspires to make "a modest contribution to the quite modern science of social geography." Mille has been compared to Kipling. Admitting the *rapprochement*, it was easy to show that his agreeable descriptions, his discreetly mocking good sense had not the relief which gives authority to the lyrical or humoristic creations of his pretended model. Mille has, on the other hand, from *Quand Panurge ressuscita* and *L'Enfant et la Reine morte*, to *Le Bol de Chine* and *Les Mémoires d'un Dada besogneux*, written a whole series of works in which he is content to inscribe, in the margin of current events, a smiling story or a lively essay of literary or artistic criticism. Nothing more was needed for certain critics to reduce him to the level of a mere journalist, enhancing his fables with a touch of Anglomania.

Pierre Mille's three soundest books—*Barnavaux et quelques femmes*, *Caillou et Tili*, *Le Monarque*—have a common trait: the central figure, a soldier in the colonial infantry, a little boy of five, a *Méridional* half Tartarin, half Don Quixote, is always a poet whose imagination transfigures reality. Each of them is there, like "the figure placed by artists at the foot of the building they are painting. He is quite small, but he gives the scale. He is nothing, and the picture is nothing without him." Their presence ensures the necessary link among the various tales of "*la vaste terre*" told by the author. He gladly yields them first place, but does not disappear. His personal experience reinforces Barnavaux' intuitions in matters of colonial or international politics. He confirms Caillou's wisdom by his distrust of an education which generally consists "in making little Frenchmen lose their personality and their instincts." He averts the irony which menaced *Le Monarque* by a series of tales of the North. Thus Pierre Mille's art associates life and fantasy. Sometimes the balance is destroyed for example in *Louise et Barnavaux* where the hero let himself be enmeshed in the real; but, in all his successful work, a sane poetry turns smiles insensibly into tears, amusement into emotion. There remains a melancholy in the farewell to the ageing *Monarque* and we have better understood the grandeur and servitude of military life when we leave Barnavaux who has "really made bread, life, glory."

The Espélunque, scene of *Le Monarque*, is not far from Grasse, Aix and Marseilles where Francis de Miomandre has situated several of his novels. Miomandre also loves the Far East; but he feels no need to go and see it. A few bibelots suffice him for its evocation and his desk at Auteuil, pleasantly described in *Les Voyages d'un sédentaire*, is a world for him. Does he not himself possess that imagination, ever alert, which he has attributed to Pierre de Meillan in *Ecrit sur de l'eau* and to Simon de Torville in *Le Veau d'or et la Vache enragée*, Provençals without money but so rich in projects that they live in the illusion of a fabulous fortune? That novelist is not unworthy of such characters who, with the minimum of romantic means, evokes the fantasy of *La Cabane d'amour* and the drama of *Le Journal interrompu*, who defines one of his works as "a model of the desultory form," who aspires in another to aim merely at the preservation of "the sacred rights of the improbable" and on the threshold of a third inscribes this warning: "If you know the charms of leisure and of digression, you will enjoy my book." And has not the author of the fine criticisms in *Le Pavillon du mandarin* found his recompense when the Far East

came to him, in *L'Aventure de Thérèse Beauchamps*, under the form of two Chinamen whose smooth, mysterious politeness dissembles with equal perfection, love and sensuality, devotion and egotism, the uncommon and the commonplace?

3. EXOTICISM AND ADVENTURE

Claude Farrère's first books were received with enthusiasm. Once more a naval officer was going to renew exoticism. Very different from the lyrical Loti, Farrère revealed himself a master of the dramatic novel. *Fumées d'opium* offered, athwart its pageant of the "epochs," the diversity of powerful and tender legends, the grandiose naval fresco in which M. de Fierce triumphs and the crescendo nightmares of the trances. In the works which followed, Farrère painted vigorous Oriental settings—Indo-China, Japan, Turkey. Each book was a cosmopolitan fan. The strokes of this brush were so sure that the depiction of the external attitudes sufficed to evoke the most complex psychology, to indicate, across an enormous gulf, subtle analogies between East and West. Capable of passion in the epic pages which terminate *Les Civilisés*, Farrère excelled in awakening the sense of the mysterious. Far more than the picturesque hara-kiri or the descriptions of Stamboul, the old Chinaman of *La Bataille* and the old Turk of *L'Homme qui assassina* rendered sensible the enigmatic power of the stationary Oriental civilizations compared to which our feverish activities appeared childish. After reading such novels, one repeated what Louÿs said after *Fumées d'opium*: "Anything may be expected of a young writer capable of composing such pictures."

Farrère wished to strip himself of this exotic prestige. At least, in *Mademoiselle Dax, jeune fille*, he kept the solidity of his technique. The satire of a *bourgeoisie* "respectable to the point of throwing Alice Dax into the street" gives agreeable relief to the extremely well handled story of a fairly commonplace adventure; but *Les Petites Alliées* (sequel to *Mademoiselle Dax*) unfortunately destroys the balance. Taking as a background Toulon, which he describes with his usual distinctness, Farrère tries to convert us to a garrulous ethics. Now, although very different from Henri Bordeaux', his morality none the less burdens the narrative.

Should this failure in the didactic form be held responsible for the reaction which drove Farrère to the novel of adventure? *La Maison des hommes vivants* rather curiously mingled memories of Edgar Poe and the inspiration of the latter part of *Fumées* with the plot of a popular novel. His success in this field seems to have decided Farrère not to leave it. Whether he draws upon the chronicles of the

Frères de la Côte in *Thomas l'Agnelet, gentilhomme de fortune*, or the recent war in *La Dernière Déesse*, whether he tells endless stories of sailors and soldiers, he now appears to aim merely at deriving from them rather cheap melodramatic effects. By dint of keeping close to journalism, he ends by writing and thinking journalese—witness that *Condamnés à mort* the comic grandiloquence of which is disarming . . . And in *Les Hommes Nouveaux*, all the reportorial commonplaces spoil the solid portrait of Amédée Bourron, African money-grabber.

Thomas l'Agnelet cleverly unites exoticism and adventure. Already before the war the novel of adventure had again come into favour with the public and also with the young writers to whom Schwob had shown, by his example and by his translations of Stevenson and Defoe, that there was no reason for abandoning this form to the hacks. The war had helped to rehabilitate it by provoking an imaginative exodus. Thus many writers who would formerly have prolonged their poetic period a little have begun with a novel of adventure. This is the case with Jean Galmot whose *Quelle Etrange Histoire* . . . tells a story of the sea and of the Guiana jungle with brutal lyricism; and Louis Chadourne—to whom we are since indebted for an interesting psychological novel, *L'Inquiète Adolescence*—made himself known by his *Maître du navire* which, while showing what residue of Byronic romanticism remains in the novel of adventure, corrects it with a very up-to-date humour fed by all the exotic and fantastic poets of 1920.

Pierre Benoît has had leisure to reveal without hindrance his whole poetic personality in *Diadumène* and *Les Suppliantes*, volumes of legendary and historical evocations wherein fifteen halting verses lead to a sixteenth which is, regularly, a spurious good verse. When one has read two volumes of quatrains in this style:

J'aime en toi cet orgueil, ce respect de toi-même,
Poussé jusques au point où tu l'auras conduit,
Toi qui sais préférer la bure morne et blême
Aux baisers de quelqu'un que tu n'as pas choisi

(*Pour Junie.*)

one understands Benoît's seeking fortune elsewhere than in literature. His first novels of adventure, *Kœnigsmark* and *L'Atlantide*, were not much inferior to the similar productions of Maurice Leblanc or Gaston Leroux. On the contrary, *Pour Don Carlos* and *Le Lac salé* make one doubt whether Benoît can even construct a good dime novel.

This poverty renders more evident the virtuosity of Pierre Mac Orlan, a prolific writer whose most striking quality is an inexhaustible spirit of drollery. Certain gruesome pleasantries already displayed this in his war book, *Les Poissons morts.* It animates *Le Chant de l'équipage* and, in spite of the negligences of style which appear almost provocative, creates living characters like Joseph Krühl. This book bears witness to a singular talent for construction by means of easy gradations, from humoristic fantasy to true adventure, from caricature to violent emotion, which is also the charm of the story in *A bord de "l'Etoile matutine."* In the *Petit Manuel du parfait aventurier* Mac Orlan has amused himself by unveiling to the public the workings of the romantic imagination, connecting the state for adventure with the most cruel erotic dissimulation. *La Chronique des temps désespérés,* a series of stories in the manner of Schwob inspired exclusively by the terrible and with no place for pity, accentuates the inhuman aspect of this art. On the contrary, in *La Cavalière Elsa,* the dry humour and the motley picturesqueness of Russia under the Soviets and of that Montmartre already evoked in *La Clique du café Brebis,* do not stifle the poetic voice of the chorus. For this inspiration of Mac Orlan's has abrupt lyric reactions, such as the end of *Le Nègre Léonard et Maître Jean Mullin,* an amusing story of witchcraft: "Each of us possesses in himself, in his most secret thoughts, the little vulgar detail permitting him to end his days in melancholy." In the universe which Paul Morand, in *Ouvert la Nuit* and still more in *Fermé la Nuit,* presents us as cut to shreds by human caprice, Mac Orlan enjoys revealing occult influences which seek each other confusedly and, if they meet, can lead, invisible, the dance of a mad world. Such is the profound meaning of *La Vénus internationale,* a bold anticipation where the association of two beings through the spaces arrests an instant the world catastrophe and where their tragic disunion marks the ruin of Europe, "beautiful, heavy corolla broken on its stem."

To be successful an exotic novel must be doubly successful. Too often the exoticism is used merely to strengthen a mediocre love-story. Such is the case with Jean d'Esme's *Thi-bâ, fille d'Annam.* In *Le Kilomètre 83* by Henry Daguerches it is, on the contrary, the plot which cramps an interesting description of Saïgon, of the Khmère forest and the construction of the Siam-Cambodia railway; but the exotic novel benefits by an undeniable attraction. Of the numerous books by Jean Ajalbert the most read remain *Sao-Van-Di,* the story of a Laotian love idyll with an atmosphere of songs and lyrical improvisations, and *Raffin-Su-Su* in which the life of a Government Commis-

sioner, after fourteen years' residence in Laos, is described with restrained sympathy. Tonkin and Annam provide the settings amid which Jules Boissière, author of *Propos d'un Intoxiqué* and *Fumeurs d'Opium* has placed his penetrating analyses of the ravages of the drug and of its effects upon refined minds. The complex poetry of his *Comédiens ambulants* remains a unique document. The wholesome evocation of French Canada had much to do with the success of *Maria Chapdelaine,* a robust novel in which Louis Hémon has faithfully interpreted the double atmosphere of provincial life and the free life devoted to "making land," in which he has eloquently awakened voices of the past sufficiently persuasive to decide the heroine to choose this rude existence in spite of the glittering temptations of the great cities. *Des Hommes* by Bernard Combette who, like Louis Hémon, disappeared before giving his full measure, brings together stories based upon memories of travels in China and in the Congo brush. Brutal shocks and subtle impressions remain inextricably mingled in them.

Despite his premature death, Victor Segalen left a refined work compared to which many volumes of brilliant Orientalism seem medleys of bad taste. A poet, he revealed himself in the book of Chinese *Stèles,* patient crystallizations of the "whirling eddies of the great stream Diversity," sumptuous pictures of "life sugar-sweet or sharply spiced." Some, facing South, tell of imperial majesty. Others, straight North, have the charm of mysterious friendship. Those by the wayside, "accessible to all . . . follow the indifferent gesture of the road." Those of the middle bring to mind the prohibited joys, the forbidden city, the hidden name. The *stèles* turned to the West are heroic, written in blood. Those turned to the East sing deceptive love.

"Drawing up I know not what. Casting the plaited basket of my desire to the depths of her eyes, I did not reach the water lapping pure and deep. . . .

"Either the basket was loosely plaited, or the cord too short; or there was nothing at the bottom."

(*Visage dans les yeux.*)

All invite the soul to the same poetic oblivion: "Listen, in self-abandonment, to the sound and to the shadow of the sound in the shell from the sea into which everything plunges."

Stèles was dedicated to Paul Claudel—the homage of a brother poet, not of an imitator. The independence of Segalen whose *Immémoriaux,* published in 1907, had nothing of Claudel about them, breaks out in *Peintures,* "a spectacle . . . a parade" in which the author unrolls before our eyes "long, sombre silken paintings covered

with soot and mirroring the earliest ages." And here are the haunting images of magic pictures, the powerful evocations of *Cortèges et Trophée,* the epic perspectives of dynastic frescoes. A summary can suggest the power and variety of *Peintures,* their accuracy which omits nothing—not even, when necessary, "the brush's hesitation"; but communion with this rich text will alone unveil its ingenious novelty. While the Claudel of *Connaissance de l'Est* imposes his lyrical visions upon the reader, Segalen wished his "game" to become "a reciprocal work." Subtly he enrols us among "his companions . . . his accomplices." He demands our collaboration: "You will see nothing if you remain thus spectators dazzled by the appearance. Let me lead you to the depths; and taking us by the hand, he guides us indeed through the swarming theatres "coarse as life itself so often in its inborn love of the boards," as well as towards the fantasies and the "landings in the unreal." Is not moreover that *Orphée Roi* which was at first "the Orphic text of a king Debussy would have enthroned," another landing in the ideal? In his second version—the only one which Segalen published—this human and mystical drama, a noble interpretation of the richest myth of the "sonorous world," has the grandeur of one of those sayings of the "ancient speech" which the novelist of *Les Immémoriaux* has magnified.

The hieratic *Orphée Roi* will fully satisfy those whom Segalen charms above all by his aristocratic reserve and his chivalrous generosity. The lively novels where he lays aside everything hermetic will enjoy a less lofty success. *Les Immémoriaux,* a picture of Tahiti and of the Maoris, a tale in which humour, satiric indignation and lyricism combine without conflict, has the richness and the high relief of the best Gauguins. *René Leys,* a supreme evocation of the Imperial Court and of that China he loved with so intelligent a passion, adds to these qualities the creation of an elusive atmosphere, charged with poetry and with irony, which justifies the last words of *Peintures:* "So many things, half seen, can never be seen." Too thoroughly penetrated with the sentiment of diversity to believe naïvely that an exotic painting immediately dispels the mystery, Segalen is not an improviser. Each of his novels rests upon a solid acquaintance with the country, with its speech, with its history. The art of *Les Immémoriaux* and of *René Leys* masks a very sure knowledge. Its verve is never superficial. Like a fresh stream, it descends from the mountain of the *Stèles:* "And, leaving thee for the plain, how much beauty the plain again has for me!" From the height of this "solid tempest shutting in the flight of the clouds and my hopes," the poet-novelist had the right to repeat the cry of his Orpheus: "The

work is accomplished, the work is fair." Fair, indeed, and of an enduring originality.

The work of Louis Bertrand, a native of Metz and an Algerian by adoption, presents a remarkable unity. His critical works, *La Grèce du soleil et des paysages* and the important manifesto entitled *Le Mirage oriental* declare "the breakdown of local colour" in an Orient which is "neither the fairyland our poets have described nor the country eager for modern civilization our Utopists dream of." If he tolls the knell of a poetic illusion, it is to make way for a reality which is "the renaissance of the Latin races in French Africa." Bertrand is entitled to the double testimonal he offers himself in the preface to *Villes d'or*: "I have brought a new conception of North Africa which is, all told, but the ancient Roman province of Africa . . . I have removed its Islamic and pseudo-Arabic decoration." *Les Villes d'or* and *Le Jardin de la mort* describe the scene of all the dramas of the "old Latin imperialism" from the Romans down to the adventures of the wagoner Rafaël or the fisherman Pepète. His *Saint Augustin*, the life of "a Latin of Occitania," the ideal type of the African Latin, shows that in North Africa the Latin hero "has never ceased to live, even during the most troubled and barbarous epochs."

If in our North Africa Bertrand meets memories of Rome at every step, he also finds there the memory of Flaubert who visited that country and has left admirable "psychological rather than realistic descriptions of it," says Bertrand in his *Gustave Flaubert*. And the author of *Le Sang des races* does not dissimulate his debt to the author of *Salammbô:* "Men of every nation were there." This swarming of the Latin races of which our African Empire is the crucible, that is what Louis Bertrand excels in painting in broad frescoes. Elsewhere his technique is less sure, whether in *Les Bains de Phalère* the Græco-French heroine of which does not succeed in being enigmatic, in the dull story of an old maid of Lorraine, *Mademoiselle de Jessincourt*, in *Le Rival de Don Juan* where the descriptions of Seville are unable to galvanize a tedious melodrama, or lastly in *L'Infante*, a spun-out incident of the history of Cerdagne under Louis XIV. The subjects adapted to Bertrand's talent are those which demand not a concentration but a dispersion of the interest. About the character of the carter Rafaël who travels between Algiers and Laghouat, of the beloved fisherman Pepète, of the tribune Carmelo, of the singer Cina, of Mgr. Puig, he constructs vast picaresque or tragic novels, *Le Sang des races*, *Pepète et Balthasar*, *La Cina*, in which representatives of all the

Mediterranean world jostle one another; and this whole "African cycle" is animated by the hope that the old French civilization will hear, behind the picturesqueness of the spectacle, the lesson of rejuvenation brought by this robust barbarism.

Eugène Montfort, too, has painted the Mediterranean world; but the author of *Noces folles* and of *La Chanson de Naples* regards Italy, Spain and Marseilles—those countries where "a woman is a beautiful, radiant animal"—as a peculiarly propitious background for the love-stories which he says he writes "for the boudoir" (*Le Châlet dans la montagne*) or "for the smoking-room" (*Nuits d'Espagne*). In the same way the principal interest of Ferdinant Duchêne's Barbary novel, *Au pas lent des Caravanes*, lies in a skilfully developed love-drama. The success which greeted *Le Livre de Goha le Simple*, by Albert Adès and Albert Josipovici, in spite of its more than Orientally lazy loquacity, shows that this convenient formula has wearied readers eager for a real change of scene.

The activity of the brothers Marius-Ary Leblond is very diverse but subordinated to a central idea. Whether they publish a colonial anthology or a study on Leconte de Lisle, *Les Sortilèges* (a novel of races of the Indian Ocean) or *L'Oued* (a novel of the Oran), their essential aim is to make our colonies better loved. Born on the island of Réunion, the review which they edit was called *La Grande France* before becoming *La Vie*, and the hero of *En France* (Prix Goncourt 1909) passed his infancy in Réunion before leaving for Paris. Many of their books are terribly luxuriant, written with a haste which excludes neither false Goncourtisms nor commonplaces; but their conviction is often persuasive and their *Ophélia* contains episodes of a real dramatic poetry.

4. THE NOVEL OF IMAGINATION

The imaginative novel is the realm in which the taste for grandiose constructions can best be gratified. The enemies of Naturalism set their hearts upon erecting edifices as vast as that of *Les Rougon-Macquart*. We already note the ruins of this ambitious effort. The books of Jean Lombard, *L'Agonie* and *Byzance*, are frankly unreadable and their coruscating ornaments ill conceal their bad writing. As to *La Décadence latine*, the ample *éthopée* of Joséphin Péladan, the Sar Péladan, grand-master of the *Rose Croix*, this now offers little interest save for patient lovers of the curious. They will find in it, side by side with picturesque gossip of the time, a document on the Wagnerian and mystical influences during the Symbolist epoch, even some witty and eloquent pages; but it calls for much

curiosity and great patience, for even in *Les Dévotes d'Avignon* will be found the same mixture of exasperated Petrarchism and Wagnerian fake, of aspiration after impassioned chastity and of verbal incontinence.

Elémir Bourges accuses the Naturalists of having "belittled and deformed man." He has gone to school with Shakespeare and the Elizabethans, reminiscences of whom are frequent in his work, giving them sometimes the air of a poetic mosaic. The novelist of *Les Oiseaux s'envolent et les Fleurs tombent* delays very long, through the adventures of a Russian Grand Duke the tragic monotony of which is not very convincing, the moment for his hymn "of adoration to the absolute Nothingness." *Le Crépuscule des Dieux*, a large fresco the central figure in which is a German princelet dethroned in 1866, curiously combines the *Götterdämmerung* and *'Tis a pity she's a whore!* A noble lyrical inspiration fills *La Nef*, a prose poem whose Hellenism is perfumed with Anglicism and which depicts, "after life's fitful fever," the triumph of Prometheus, like the ship *Argo* which, "ignorant of the hidden helm and of the wind swelling her sails, believes she steers herself."

Working in collaboration or separately, J. H. Rosny *ainé* and J. H. Rosny *jeune* have tried nearly every form of fiction—the social novel (*L'Impérieuse Bonté*), a picture of the lower-classes (*Marthe Baraquin*), vast contemporary syntheses (*Les Pures et les Impures*). From *Le Thermite* to *Torches et Lumignons* literary life has found in them its annalists; but their most attractive books are those in which their imagination has free play, such as *Les Xipéhuz* and *Le Cataclysme* which justify J. H. Rosny *ainé's* saying: "Science is for me a poetic passion." Their domain is the prehistoric where *Vamireh*, *Le Félin géant* and *La Guerre du feu*—"a novel of the fierce ages" which is, in its own field, a masterpiece—are situated. In a style which might readily be described as quaternary, they evoke elementary forces, enormous beasts and primitive beings, indicating the sketch of man in the brute and showing, in Noah or Aoûn, the awakening of mysterious pity and of human tenderness.

The brilliant story-teller of *Saint-Cendre* and *Blancador l'Avantageux*, Maurice Maindron, does not stray into ages so shadowy. He loves the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, dear to the costume-novelists, and relates seductively the exploits of *Ce Bon M. de Veragues* and *La Filleule de M. le Prince*. True he has written *L'Arbre de science*, a modern novel; but his real profession of faith will be found at the beginning of the two-volume *Dans l'Inde du Sud:* "The singular love I have for past ages is perhaps too exclusive for me to

feel, with regard to the present, any sentiment other than that of an indifferent equity." The six tales in *Le Carquois* form a sort of anthology of his tastes and an abstract of his agreeable work.

Under the collective title *L'Epopée française*, George d'Esparbès has recounted the exploits of the warriors from Henri IV to *Ceux de l'An 14*. Of these dozen volumes full of go and spirit the most justly renowned are *La Guerre en dentelles*, *La Légende de l'Aigle* and *Les Demi-Solde*.

D'Esparbes limits himself to stressing the picturesque glamour of the military profession Ernest Psichari undertook to bring out its mysticism. The work of this writer killed in battle in his thirty-first year constitutes the best document on the generation which, before being "sacrificed," wished, under the influence of Barrès and of Péguy, to oppose the absence of practical conclusions in its immediate predecessors with some strong affirmations founded upon renewed tradition. Of this association of the terms "France" and "Christendom," of this struggle *ense et cruce*, no champion was more representative than Renan's grandson, "taking against his father the side of his fathers"; and, to define this anti-intellectualism in love with adventure, we must also mention among its masters Bergson and Jules Verne a sentence from whom serves as motto for *L'Appel des armes*.

The protagonist of *L'Appel des armes* is a captain of Colonial artillery who has been weaned from the melancholy of Vigny and of Timoléon d'Arc by the "atrocious and voluptuous charm of the Sahara" and the pride of being a conqueror. His example wins to the same ideal the son of an internationalistic schoolmaster who discovers, in the barracks and on an African expedition, that military grandeur transcends military servitude. Psichari paints the development of these two characters in a style which suggests Péguy (to whom the book is dedicated) and above all Barrès from whom he borrows, in the psychological reflections, that harsh present indicative reflecting the tense will of an observer who inexorably leads his puppets towards the end he has assigned them.

L'Appel des armes was, moreover—Psichari warned his reader—only "the first stage of a road which was to lead him to purer grandeurs." *Le Voyage du centurion* dresses up as a novel the Mauretanian expedition and the progress of a conversion to Catholicism of which *Les Voix qui crient dans le désert* is the diary. In it the hero, Maxence, denies his Voltairian father. Still stirred sensually by "the scent of Africa," he feels even more the spiritual appeal: "In contact with the Arab he is a Frank." His pride is "a Catholic pride."

The radiance of love which emanates from the person of Jesus and which already formed the supreme argument of the Pascalian Mystery completes the sapping of his resistance. The mystic dialogue which ends this book epitomizes Psichari's evolution. Moving in its ardent simplicity, it gives us the right to believe that its author had obtained from literature the only service he asked of it, that of clearly illustrating his arguments for living and for dying.

5. THE WAR NOVEL

The "militaristic" work of Péguy and of Psichari was not inhuman but gravely evoked urgent problems. In the same way, the war novel was not, on the whole, warlike. One would have had to be blind to the duration and the immensity of the carnage to dare rejoice in it. The books which were popular from 1917 to 1918 show rather clearly the fluctuations of opinion during that period. None of them is guilty of sacrilege against humanity.

Gaspard does not transcend the superficial facility which characterizes René Benjamin's other productions. Everything about it is conventional: the war and its asides, the soldiers and their nurses; but the character of Gaspard, snail-merchant in the Rue de la Gaîté, joking, heroic *Parigot*, is one of those which, since Gavroche, are sure of universal sympathy. In 1915, the public demanded a relaxation. It was found in this unpretentious journalism.

Soon appeared the book which was the best-seller of our times: *Le Feu* by Henri Barbusse. Twenty years earlier Barbusse had made his début with a volume of verse, *Les Pleureuses*, which showed a sensibility easily stirred by the most fugitive shades of modern reality but was unable to express them in a definitive form. The poem *La Lettre:*

Je t'écris et la lampe écoute.
L'horloge attend à petits coups;
Je vais fermer les yeux sans doute
Et je vais m'endormir de nous . . .

shows clearly enough the limits of this familiar lyricism. In *L'Enfer* Barbusse posed as a successor of Zola and this novel contains some powerful descriptions; but the writer had, at the same time, yielded to the desire of inditing a sort of philosophical compendium of his epoch. This was a misconception of his own talent. If there exist minds for which ideas count only according to their abstract value, Barbusse represents the other extreme. He apprehends the sentimental radiation of ideas. Before an intellectual notion, he shows

all the reactions of a generous heart but never paints them in their impartial nudity. The thought of the author of *L'Enfer* equals in its simplicity that of the *Couturière* of whom he has sung:

Elle croit à la beauté,
Elle croit à l'harmonie,
Elle se sent infinie,
Les lèvres dans la clarté.

We have recalled the enormous success of *Le Feu.* It was perhaps due at the start, to its extraordinary accent of sincerity. For the first time a writer brought his readers, without any literary interposition, the truth, an exact description of life in the trenches. This popularity however was not a surprise. *Le Feu,* in fact, unites all the qualities of Barbusse's humanitarian realism. In this "diary of a squad" he has almost always forbidden himself to go beyond his personal experience and the point of view of the simple soldier. Thence the intensity of the pages in which, recounting a day without incident, a task or an attack, he evokes, with the relief of their concrete precision, the duration, the mud, the elementary instincts. His emotion, deep enough to disdain every artifice, revives with a virile sympathy or a tender humour the memory of his comrades in arms who were not heroes but, more gloriously, men. Even the harsh satire which stigmatizes the division of the Fatherland into "two foreign countries, the front and the rear," is not a factitious opposition. It is born of a hundred little facts which keep their force. Above all, it is dominated by the poignant sentiment that, if the civilians quickly forget what the combatants suffered for them, these last themselves will not keep a memory of it intact: "One is full of the emotion of reality at the moment, and one is right; but all that wears itself out in you."

Le Feu represented the war in all its horror, more hateful still because painted with this tragic sobriety. Barbusse would have been lacking in honesty had he not sought what remedy would avoid the return of the "frightful things done by thirty million men who do not want them." Some pages of *Le Feu* distinctly indicated his pacificism. A dawn of hope rose over this sinister battle-field. It was therefore inevitable that Barbusse should appear to many veterans as a guide and that it should be impossible for him to shun this honour. Persuaded by Zola's example that the novel can become an instrument of political apostleship, he wrote *Clarté* in which the romantic plot badly veils his intention of proving that, according to the conclusion of *Les Paroles d'un combattant,* "the only human voice which har-

monizes with nature itself, the thinking music of the dawn and the sun, is the song of the International." Every judgment on Barbusse's last books depends upon the opinion one professes concerning the militant activity to which he has subordinated everything.

It is, on the contrary, the writer, not the partisan, who must be loved in Georges Duhamel whose *Vie des Martyrs* confounded all those—"members of the Institut, actresses of the café-concert, politicians and stars of prostitution"—who "have worked to give us a congruous and definitive literary picture of war." He opposed to them "the sole thing certain at this moment of the century": human suffering. He showed death "intimately mingled with the things of life." He was at one and the same time the doctor ("Under their bandages there are wounds which you cannot imagine") and the poet for whom nothing is without importance: "Let us lose nothing of their humble talk, let us describe their slightest gestures." Without declamation, he painted the tragedies and the delicacies of the hospital. Without generalization, he showed all the shades of emotion up to the "frail bridge" cast between him and a wounded German by a motif of the *Eroica*. With a powerful sobriety he demanded that the memory of so much pain should not die. He appealed by his prayers to "the union of pure hearts for the redemption of the unhappy world." *Civilisation* did more than continue *Vie des Martyrs*. It completed it. The comic element in *Un Enterrement* and the admirable *Cuirassier Cuvelier* appeared more gruesome there, the revolt in *Les Maquignons* and *Discipline* sharper; and Duhamel presented more categorically the problem of civilization: "If it be not in the heart of man, well, then, it is nowhere."

"It is the heart that should be addressed": "*La Possession du monde* repeated it and, what is more dangerous, undertook to prove it. This book is a sort of *Trésor des humbles* in which Duhamel, remembering religious teachings, the Stoics, the Mystics and Bergson, preaches love and "the inner life." In it he finds the assurance that our existence has as its aim that happiness which is neither pleasure, nor well-being, nor enjoyment, nor voluptuousness." Happiness is based upon possession, that is to say, upon the perfect and profound knowledge of the world, of others, of the lyrical life. The author seemed to devote himself to a prophetic theoretical apostleship of the "heart's reign."

Duhamel is however too perspicacious an artist to sacrifice to dogmatism his talent as a story-teller which was found again in *Les Hommes abandonnés*, a series of tales dedicated to the study of "those

primitive passions which, like great hunted wild beasts, have withdrawn to the depth of the forests, but await, to emerge, merely a weakening of the world, a moment of anguish, a storm." The type of these abandoned men is Salavin who reappears here and who was already, with less contrivance, the hero of *Confession de minuit* where he confessed his sad story to the "stout shaven chap with eye-glasses and a brown overcoat." In Salavin Duhamel describes a mind in which unconscious activity prevails over conscious thought, which believes itself responsible for all the criminal suggestions it has not immediately rejected. Not possessing the counterpoise of an intellectual energy to re-establish the values, he is a victim of automatism and keeps in the foreground of his meditation what others drive far from them. One should not expect from this deliberately limited portrait the immense cross-currents of humanity which, at Dostoïevski's breath, perturb the troubled weakness of similar souls; but nowhere has Duhamel's art better declared its power in turning the reveries of the inner life into "events," in soberly surroundings an insignificant character with a halo of fraternal sympathy.

Les Croix de bois by Roland Dorgelès appeared as a sort of final state of the war novel. No combatant's testimony had offered for its heroes, chiefs and soldiers, intellectuals and workmen, the wide impartiality which distinguishes the robust narratives in this book and in *Le Cabaret de la Belle Femme.* The chapters describing life in the trenches and the attacks equalled the tragic pages of *Le Feu;* but the author never pretended to generalize. He did not exclude the "divine foolery" which fortified his comrades. His most vigorous strokes revived the realism of the combatants: "The Marne is a combine which brought fifteen sous apiece to the boys who won it." He courageously stresses the "terrible grandeur" of this confession of Sulphart's: "It's a victory for me, because I got out of it alive." It would be hard to find in all the literature of the war a simpler and more complete summing-up of the sentiments it provoked among the *poilus* than the thirty pages of *Victoire* which recount the assault, the departure from the trenches, the glorious procession, the start of pride finally which justifies a brief commentary: "Come, there'll always be wars, always, always." This sober realism is indeed Dorgelès' master-quality. *Saint Magloire* in which he narrates the failure of an apostle in post-war society becomes journalism as soon as the author no longer observes in it that discipline which has given *Les Croix de bois,* so spontaneous a book, a sort of style.

After these capital works, the open-minded reader will not refuse to hear other testimony. *La Flamme au poing* by Henry Malherbe, will give him the notes of a cultivated combatant grouped about three themes: Memory, Love and Death. In *Nach Paris* Louis Dumur, formerly known for amusing pictures of Genevese Calvinism, has drawn up an indictment against German atrocities. Jean des Vignes Rouges has, in *André Rieu, officier de France,* wished to give the point of view of the chiefs, while Raymond Lefebvre and Paul Vaillant-Couturier, authors of *La Guerre des soldats,* outdid Barbusse's anti-militarism. Adrien Bertrand, in the narratives and conversations of *L'Appel du sol,* as well as in the dialogues of *L'Orage sur le jardin de Candide,* has imparted the confidences of an *agrégé de philosophie,* disciple of Anatole France, who feels himself "a cell of the nation," hears "the call of the French soil" and dies as a hero "that France may continue." Paul Reboux, whose versatile inspiration had turned successively to Paris, Naples, Brittany and Spain, wrote in two volumes *Les Drapeaux,* a work of anti-militaristic propaganda which tries to annex the science of statistics to the novel. Perhaps he brought to loading the dice a little of that skill which made him baptize as a "Negro novel" his *Romulus Coucou* whose hero is a mulatto. In *Indice 33,* Alexandre Arnoux has constructed a dramatic narrative. His talent as a story-teller is shown in the military tales of *Le Cabaret* as well as in *La Nuit de Saint-Barnabé,* a lively document on the imagination of the Parisian street-urchins in 1920. Marcel Berger, whose *l'Homme enchainé* had treated a complex problem clumsily but loyally, described, in *Jean Darboise,* the grey life of the men in the auxiliary service. In *Les Dieux tremblent,* he tried to materialize the vengeful hatred of a wounded man for those spared by the storm but drowned this interesting idea in a series of melodramatic incidents. Paul Géraldy, with that art of reducing every lofty subject to a drawing-room dialogue which is demonstrated by his *Noces d'argent,* described, in *La Guerre, Madame,* a day in Paris in the autumn of 1915, suggesting the greatness of the events, representing the snobbishness of certain circles with a faithful facility. He did not exhaust his subject, since Maurice Level was able to write *Mado ou la Guerre à Paris,* which keeps the promise of its title. A renewal of Orientalism might have been expected from the expedition to Salonica. *A Salonique, sous l'œil des Dieux* by J. J. Frappa does not lure us with any poetic mirage. As for the stay of the Anglo-Saxons in France, Marcel Prévost took care that at least a comic memory of it should remain. *Mon cher Tommy* left them the image of a French girl for their use,

not omitting, it is true, to teach them that, in certain trails, "one needs to appeal to all his British firmness to resist the decree of the divine will." After so much vain literature, better justice will be done to the sober realism of Corporal Georges Gaudy in *L'Agonie du Mont-Renaud*, to the amiable mixture of humour and wit in *Les Silences du Colonel Bramble* and *Discours du Docteur O'Grady* by André Maurois, to the savoury verve of Pierre Chaine, author of the *Mémoires d'un Rat* and of *Les Commentaires de Ferdinand*, as well as to the ironic narrations of life in a dépôt which Jean Galtier-Boissière, one of the editors of *Le Crapouillot*, has collected in *Loin de la Rifflette*.

6. THE SOCIAL NOVEL: OBSERVATION AND SATIRE

The social novel forms part of the Naturalistic heritage. It stems from the Goncourts and Zola as much as from Flaubert and Balzac. The example of Henry Céard shows this relationship. His most characteristic work, the huge *Terrains à vendre au bord de la mer*, reviews all classes of contemporary society in a Breton landscape dishonoured by the incurable baseness of its inhabitants. All the characters, from the most heroic to the vilest, move on in it to the downfall of their desires; and this pessimistic fresco liquidates Naturalism and Wagnerism in the slime.

Gustave Geoffroy has given, in *L'Enfermé*, a vivid biography of Blanqui. His *Apprentie*, a convincing account of the youth of an honest Belleville girl during the war of 1870, the Commune and the first years of the Republic, is dedicated "to the girls of Paris in token of a barbarous epoch." [1] He seems to judge literature according to its value as propaganda, rather than on its strictly literary merits. It is thus not surprising, that his vote, as president, caused the Prix Goncourt to be given to René Maran's *Batouala* in which the Negro social question is presented in a jargon which one believed to be reserved for parodying translations of Russian novels.

The art of Paul and Victor Margueritte is suppler. Under the title *Une Epoque* they attempted—dedicating it to their father, General Margueritte—a vast picture of the events of 1870–71 in which the novel was to serve history. Their *Désastre* opposes the sombre epic of *La Débâcle* with a series of pictures the dispersion of which is not unfaithful to its design. Separated, the two brothers have described their age in many novels and stories without recapturing, even in the ambitious *Jouir* and in *La Garçonne* which is intended to be "daring," the restrained emotion which distinguished *La Force*

[1] The sequel to this work, *Cécile Pommier*, has since appeared in 1923. *Tr.*

des choses. The Margueritte's' weakness is the absence in their books of an original form. They never cease writing "like everybody else." Their best book which is unquestionably *Poum*, the story of a little boy, has the same likeable qualities which have assured a public for *Mon Petit Trott* by André Lichtenberger. In *Poum* the spirit is more sparkling, freed from edifying intentions. There never appears in it any of that insipid tenderness, full of artifice and devoid of art, which makes Paul Cazin's *Décadi* the type of book not to be introduced into a child's library.

Margueritte and Lichtenberger have attempted this study of human life in the infantile microcosm from a bourgeois point of view. Others have tried to give a more popular picture of it. *La Maternelle*, by Léon Frappié, has as its heroine a teacher who writes "the diary of her school life in a poor quarter, somewhat different from a working-men's quarter properly speaking;" but the sentimental reveries and the description of the rivalries between university castes unfortunately stifle precise observation. Under the general title of *L'Epopée au Faubourg*, Alfred Machard has made himself historian of Bout de Bibi, the bad boy, of Trique, Pancucule and their associates, of Trinité Thélémaque and of the girls of the Communale in the Rue Plumette. In *La Guerre des Mômes* he has shown the most tragic events utilized by their fertile imagination. In *Popaul et Virginie* he has related the idyll of a ten-year old *faubourien* and of a little Belgian girl, and there is certainly found in all these works the inevitable dosing of humour and sentimentality, but one would seek in vain the relief which makes Poil de Carotte rival Poulbot's most living images. Nor has Gaston Chéreau achieved this creation of a type in his long and melodramatic *Champi-Tortu* which is chiefly valuable because of its details of Vendéan atmosphere and those qualities of delicate observation which give charm to *Monseigneur voyage* and *Les Grandes Epoques de M. Thébault*, rather ambitiously styled "essays in bourgeois psychology"—a title which would weigh less heavily upon *Valentine Pacqualt*, Chérau's best novel for the faithful painting of several provincial milieux about an uneven Bovary. A more faithful interpretation of the child's soul will be found in André Lafon's *L'Elève Gilles* where the shadow of a family drama sharpens the narrator's sincerity without warping it, and above all in *Le Grand Meaulnes*, by Alain Fournier, a provincial novel if one likes, but a novel of adventure also. With a moving delicacy it evokes the mysterious aspirations of an adolescence whose scruples go so far as to sacrifice to its dream the finally conquered happiness; and to these will be added *Le Sourire blessé* in which Albert Thierry has described

with a tender harshness the troubles and the revolts of this exacting age before impure, complex life.

The adolescent novel has recently acquired a high documentary value. In 1922 Jacques de Lacretelle published *Silbermann* the rather conventional plot of which is merely a pretext for showing the reactions of a young Catholic and a young Protestant towards a young Jew who adopts alternately all the attitudes Christian novelists are accustomed to expect of his race. The same year Jacques Sintral (who is also the economist Fabre-Luce) showed, in *La Ville éternelle*, the double life, political and æsthetic, imaginative and dry, of a young diplomatist, with his mistress, "exploiting all the sentiment they had with all the resources of their intelligence." In 1923, Raymond Radiguet made the mistake, in *Le Diable au corps*, of stretching a short story subject into a novel, but had also the skill to paint an adolescent engaged in a man's drama. Jean Cocteau's *Grand Ecart* described, amid many *mots* some of which are witty, the sentimental education at Paris of a youth who belongs to "the race of window-panes" and lets himself be marked by a woman "of the race of diamonds." And perhaps these books would be better assorted among the analytical novels did there not ring in them a common appeal to a new Barrès.

Will this rôle be reserved for Henry de Montherlant? He aspired to fill Chateaubriand's and Barrès' place as early as *La Relève du matin*, in 1920. In this first symphony he exalted adolescence, "the ungrateful age, the age of the soul . . . the zenith of life." When he said "boy," a pride thrilled in his voice. On his return from the war, he dictated to educators their duty which is "to make live," to subordinate everything to the young, who are the real beings, not art objects, but the future. His originality, indicated by the Dialogue with Gérard (egotist and rightly hard, "before him everything becomes clear; he is like death"), blossoms in *Le Songe*, a spirited book, charged with influences from Epictetus to Claudel, but one in which was revealed a soul. He himself stressed in it "what was singularly in his genius, comradeship" and an "irreducible opposition between the order of sport and the order of the heart." He does not dissemble the "obtuse and carnal" element in his ideas and the fact that reality always remains "a little secondary for him." Catholic, he sees in the Roman Church the continuer of the Cæsarian tradition; but, he adds, "great Pan is not dead, it is the Church which mounts guard over him, and in this claim of the passions he meets the Catholic Mauriac whose uneven *Le Fleuve de feu* contains several strong scenes. The

sensuality of Montherlant, of his Alban who wishes "to make use of beings," of his Dominique "overwhelmed by her body," is more ardently lyrical, at once in its movement and in its search for a discipline, for that "helmeted sweetness" of which he prophesies the future.

Paul Adam's style has been reproached with its massive violence combining the exasperated impressionism of the Goncourts, the desire to render with a single stroke the manifold details which charge a visual imagination, and the desire to give his novels a moving-picture movement. Adam explained this in a letter to Faguet: "When you reproach me with having used forty words instead of one, you refuse to recognize that I have tried to express simultaneously the gesture, the thought, the sight, the unconscious reflex, the divination of the near or immediate future, the sentiments perceived in the character's interlocutors and according to his particular perception, finally the lines of the setting, of the landscape or the agitation of the crowd, etc., etc."—a loyal justification since, in adding two etcs., to his enumeration, Adam admits the necessity for the writer to suggest still more than he expresses. Having defined style "as the power to evoke," he has the right to count upon his reader's not quarreling with him as to his means of evoking. On the other hand, we are authorized to hope he will vary them according to the diverse realities he aspires to evoke. Now Paul Adam, a prisoner of his style which was probably much more spontaneous than deliberate, uses the same means to paint a crowd and a consciousness. It is not surprising that the powerful portrayer of *Irène et les Eunuques*, of *Le Trust* and of the tetralogy of *La Force* should have failed so completely in the psychological novel, *Stéphanie*.

Adam had begun with *Chair molle*, in the Naturalist group. He traversed Symbolism as well. He threw himself into politics, was a Boulangist, an Anarchist and a Socialist. He owes his value as a social novelist to this double experiment. *Les Cœurs nouveaux* and *Le Mystère des Foules* relate his political disappointments. The second of these books also sets forth his theory of "the emotion of thought" by which he breaks with the school of Zola. For, though he, too, paints broad, popular frescoes, he aims at showing the crowds acting under the influence of Ideas and of Forces. *Le Trust* thus unveils the formidable strength of the money powers, of the Numbers which overwhelm even their pretended masters. He undertakes to prove that strength should and can be the slave of the generous aspirations which have reared civilization.

After his electoral failure in Lorraine, Adam turned to the past, questioned his dead. In his family he discovered the military souvenirs which he novelized in *La Force*, *L'Enfant d'Austerlitz*, *La Ruse*, *Au Soleil de Juillet*, *Le Temps et la Vie*, the epic of French liberalism, traced "the history of an ideal through the ages," showed how the task of the Romans was assumed by the Revolution and carried to completion by the Emperor, "thanks to the soldiers of Mithra" whose efforts were thwarted by his *parvenu* ambition. It was a short-lived defeat since, through the underhand struggles of the Congregation and of the Carbonari, in spite of the apparent triumph of the "prince of the banks," Omer Héricourt discerned at last "what his Latin race owed to the memory of Rome and the divinity of the Law."

Thenceforth the social novelist became a prophet of the Latin spirit. At the same time he took over the succession of Flaubert. He sought a Carthage in Byzantium, transposing to the novel Irene's great conception: "The Western and Eastern Empires must unite." In *La Villa inconnue* he magnified the work of our colonial troops and their chiefs. Author of five volumes of essays on moral problems, he preached an ideal of love-communion: "To feel that, if one dies, one will go on living in the other." Against Nietzsche in *Le Serpent noir*, against Molière in *Stéphanie*, he reared the great Latin idea, the conception of "interdependence and of the patriotism of reasoned union," of the sacrifice of the individual to the race already asserted in *La Bataille d'Uhde:* "Man must no longer be considered, but the race. The race remains the only individual whose life and glory are of importance."

Such are the main ideas of this curious mind fed on esoteric doctrines, of this indefatigable worker. He is not one of our great novelists. Would his most zealous supporters dare reread *La Ruse* after *Le Rouge et le Noir?* He strove however to free the novel from the Naturalistic rut and succeeded sometimes—like Zola—through the epic narrative, sometimes, as in *La Bataille d'Uhde*, by the constructive effort of an invention at once ample and minute, somewhat analogous to the imagination of the military chiefs he celebrated; and his victories, like theirs, always drag, behind their barbarous magnificence, the weight of vast sacrifices.

Grouping Lucien Descaves' books without taking into account the order of their publication, one would also obtain the history of an ideal—of the revolutionary ideal throughout the nineteenth century. *L'Imagier d'Epinal* paints the sentimental survival of Napoleonic enthusiasm under the Restoration, the July Monarchy and the Second

Empire, while tracing the career of an engraver who was no artist but an honest craftsman. *La Colonne* is dedicated "to the descendants of the heroes of the Commune" who pulled down the Vendôme Column, as an "encouragement to begin again." These veterans of the Commune are likened by Descaves to the *grognards* of the Empire and to the pensioners: "One always returns from a pilgrimage to the Column when one has the religion of a flag, whichever it may be," he writes in *Philémon, vieux de la vieille*. *Sous-offs* is a sinister picture of the horrors of the life of non-commissioned officers in peace time. In it are seen the hardness, the low debauchery, the exploitation of women, blackmailing and theft, "the vilenesses which can be engendered by the sheathed sabre and the easy advancement, the species of immunity they confer upon their holders." *Oiseaux de passage* marks the point of contact between the revolt of Western idealism and the revolt of Slav mysticism.

Among all these passionate, spirited stories, spare of ornament however and deriving their tragedy from a realism which does not deform reality, *Philémon, vieux de la vieille* must be put in a class by itself. "To your veterans, Republic of workers, these bulletins of their Grand Armée," announces the author. With an ardent, lucid sympathy, he has collected the memories of the humble Communards concerning the struggle of 1871 and the exile to which they were condemned for years. He has thus rendered the most moving homage to the revolutionary faith, to the dignity of their obscure lives. No noble cause ever had more need in its upholder of that firmness of style and of emotion whereby Descaves has given the lie to the double legend of the Naturalist as a bad writer and a muckraker.

The best tribute to the memory of John-Antoine Nau (1860–1918) is Lucien Descaves' preface to the new edition of *Force ennemie* which obtained the first Prix Goncourt (1903). Nau is, in fact, a pupil of the naturalists. His *Prêteur d'amour* relates the monotonous series of amours of one of those failures whom they love to paint. *Christobal le poète* recounts the education of a little thief in the disreputable Algerian milieu with Huysmans-like irony. *Force ennemie* remains the most interesting of his works. It is, in a sanatarium where ferociously naturalistic types play their parts, the frantic, sensual story of a madman who feels wakening within him the enemy in each of us. Nau has incarnated this adversary in a fantastic being of the same species as the Geunia which has furnished the title for another of his novels where will be found a few fine landscapes.

The social novel is multiform. Its label has been elastic enough to cover melodramatic tales, such as *Nini Godache* and *La Chèvre aux*

pieds d'or, indulged in by Charles-Henry Hirsch whom the literary historian would be glad to omit had not *L'Enchaînement*, a pot-pourri of all the stereotypes of action and of expression, pretended to continue Racine's *Phèdre*. Shall we give the name of social novels to *livres à clef* like *Les Maritimes*, by Olivier Seylor, declarations of passionate witnesses, occasional works destined to have a sensational success or the light chronicles of Max and Alex Fischer which amuse the reader of to-day as, it is said, Gyp's monotonous productions relaxed the reader of yesterday? It is proper, in any case, to mention Lucien Muhlfeld, whose *La Carrière d'André Tourette* left a delicate aftertaste of veiled and disdainful irony, as well as the Hellenistic poet Maurice Brillant who, in *Les Années d'apprentissage de Sylvain Briollet*, under the pretext of painting the ecclesiastical circles from which he brings back besides some very pretty silhouettes, has given Jérôme Coignard a brother less sparkling but more orthodox. The idle monologues of Abbé Joseph Boisard, his digressions on archæology, literature or journalism have a charm which no "*honnête homme*" will resist.

Roger Martin du Gard—whose *Le Testament du Père Leleu*, a peasant farce, prolongs the memory of the Théâtre Libre—has attempted, in the eloquent *Jean Barois*, the synthetic table of a generation for which the Affair was a moral and intellectual crisis, with this result that its sentimental protagonist pales a little beside the ideological Marc-Elie Luce, for the same reasons which, when we read *Les Caves du Vatican*, lead us at times to consider Protos as a hero so independent of his creator that Gide can suppress him only by calling in the police. Roger Martin du Gard has recently undertaken, in *Les Thibault*, a new fresco of contemporary life.

A part of Edmond Haraucourt's work also constitutes a criticism of his times. A poet, author of the famous

Partir, c'est mourir un peu,
C'est mourir à ce qu'on aime . . . ,

he has remained faithful, in *L'Ame nue*, *L'Espoir du monde* and several dramas in verse, to the romantic and Parnassian methods, justifying a little too much his own statement:

Je suis le jardinier des fleurs qui ne sont plus.

As a novelist, he has given proof in *Trumaille et Pélisson* of qualities of minute observation, undertaking in the long lyrical fantasy of *Dieudonat*, an ample satire of that humanity of which *Dâah le premier*

homme analyses the eternal foundation and *Vertige d'Afrique* the swelling rages.

Abel Hermant has made a specialty of satirical fantasies. The biographer of Courpière affected to describe an aristocratic immorality in nonchalant pictures where the style of contemporary banter was sprinkled with chosen archaisms. *Le Cavalier Miserey* and *La Carrière* furnished, each in its way, documents for the future historian. The enormous buffooneries of *Les Transatlantiques* and of *Trains de luxe*, even if they did not constitute very reliable memoirs for the study of an epoch, remained irresistible in their easiest successes. In the works which followed and form an ambitious synthesis, Hermant seems not to have escaped that ageing of an amiable talent which wishes to go into retirement among the great subjects. Perhaps he will thus have laid bare the methods which won him fame as a lively story-teller rather than revealed the inspired richness of a real social novelist.

It is by this megalomania that the *démon de midi* manifests itself in the humorists. It is to be hoped that it will long spare Régis Gignoux whose chronicles, in *Le Tabac du Bouc*, are all the better for being less pretentious and Georges de la Fouchardière, author of inexhaustible *hors-d'œuvre* who, in *Le Bouif*, has created a characteristic and enduring hero.

In Léon Daudet the novelist is subservient to the pamphleteer and he pursues on a double plane his task as "historian of the manners and customs of my epoch." From *Fantômes et Vivants* to *Au temps de Judas*, he has published five volumes of souvenirs in which are described from life the personages whom he has introduced into his novels and who seem to be the only living figures in them. For the sterility of his invention is compensated by an extraordinary visual power in which the saw-bones collaborates with the artist. No one takes in with a keener eye the physical person of an adversary or distorts this image into caricature with a more ludicrous verve. As for souls, Daudet implies that one always has more or less the spirit of one's body. Rather a simple conception, but all Daudet's charm lies in this simplicity. He is thus neither as amusing as the best of his articles would cause it to be supposed nor as tiresome as might be imagined from his dogmatic books were they taken seriously. One should not be more of a dupe than he himself, or proclaim that *Les Morticoles* resembles Swift and *Les Primaires* Barrès. Daudet is neither a writer nor a politician. He shocks the literary world and the world of action by his neighings and his snortings because it

is necessary to his health. He utters insults every morning as others use dumb-bells.

He has invented for his personal use what might well be termed the hygienic novel. An old Naturalistic tendency inclines him to describe monstrous scenes—rapes, incests and adulteries. In order to conciliate what he owes his party with the fascination of such subjects, Daudet attributes these exploits to some materialistic doctor or atheist. Thus the worst shockers, *Suzanne* and *L'Entremetteuse*, contribute to the defence of social order and end with the spectacle of "a human cross on which the love of the flesh expires." This naïve trick will be found in the most complete of his works, *L'Hérédo*. Happening to reflect that Royalism did not possess an original psychopathology, Daudet filled this gap with a pseudo-scientific theory based on his stirring memories and on his personal interpretation of tragic and fictional creations. The author of *Le Voyage de Shakespeare* here proves once more the variety of his culture, that of *Les Morticoles* repeats his hatred for his masters of the Ecole de Médicine and the need for a discipline by which the I yields to Self. With him the triumph of Self has been absolute. Nothing in Daudet reveals one of those I's charged with the heredities to which, he says, we owe Hamlet, Macbeth and Lear. He is a pure *Self*. He has—on the boards of his stage—reconciled Maurras with Narcissism.

Mirbeau presented Léon Werth to the public in the form of a *fauve*. Werth started with campaigns in favour of advanced painters and of no less advanced social opinions. *La Maison blanche*, a description of the "life in white" in a sanitarium, satirized the false attitudes of the so-called élite in the presence of suffering. His tone was that of a less prodigal Mirbeau. He seemed to practise condensing the master's wordy vociferations into harsh epigrams. *Clavel Soldat* and *Clavel chez les majors* attack, in all its forms, military idealism founded upon the inaction of the masses and the degradation of the individual. Werth gives vent to his misanthropy and disgust to the point of monotony. For Werth is first and foremost a trenchant logician, leading his crusade against the stupidity which "supposes speech and the power of garbing the mind with left-overs," as he writes in *Voyages avec ma pipe* where he is seen hounding hateful banality in the Breton or Dutch landscapes as well as in the streets of Paris. In *Yvonne et Pijallet* he has confessed to a disillusionment: "Since the war he loved the people less, because the people fought the war." At the same time he has stated one of the most pressing problems of his generation: how, after the war, can a lucid mind harmonize its pre-war

thought and its war thought? The pamphleteer in *Yvonne et Pijallet* often effaced itself behind the psychologist. He abandons the latter all the ground in *Les Amants invisibles*, the story of a liaison between two beings who have prolonged old sentimental habits without creating a new love from their encounter. It is perhaps in this way of cold, pitiless analysis that Léon Werth is destined finally to affirm his mastery.

Daudet and Werth have, like Rochefort and Drumont, easily found an audience because they expressed partisan rancour. Léon Bloy belonged to no party. He paid the proud penalty for it. "I keep on ahead of my thoughts in exile and in a great column of silence." He had masters: Barbey, Villiers, Hello, Carlyle particularly, "Carlyle who, in literature, appears to be my first cousin." He helped form several illustrious contemporaries, notably Huysmans; and for thirty years he fought against poverty and "the conspiracy of silence." This "wrecking contractor" thus lived at war with his whole epoch. His enormous output is the account of this long struggle told in his two great autobiographical novels, *Le Désespéré* and *La Femme pauvre*, as well as in the eight volumes of his diary: *Le Mendiant Ingrat, Mon Journal, Quatre Ans de Captivité à Cochons-sur-Marne, L'Invendable, Le Vieux de la Montagne, Le Pélerin de l'Absolu, Au Seuil de l'Apocalypse, La Porte des Humbles.*

"A very humble and very artless vociferator"—such is Bloy's definition of Bloy. "I am not of this century," he writes to Mirbeau. And again: "You judge me humanly without heeding that I am precisely outside every human point of view and that therein lies my whole strength, my only strength. The clear truth which flashes forth in all my books is that I write for God alone." He considered himself "a promulgator of the absolute . . . established in the supernatural life." His Catholicism was apocalyptic. Like his Cain Marchenoir, "he regarded the catastrophe of the secular tragic-farce of man as very near at hand." Throughout his life he watched for the preluding signs of the supreme upheaval. From 1914 to 1917 he awaited "the Cossacks and the Holy Ghost." He was "sent as a witness" to remind his contemporaries of the omnipresence of Christian liberty and solidarity: "Every man who produces a free act projects his personality into the infinite. If he gives a cent to a beggar in a heartless spirit, the cent pierces the beggar's hand, falls, pierces the earth, bores through the suns, traverses the firmament and compromises the universe."

By this constant enlargement of vision Bloy is a great prose poet.

The abusive character of his work has been much insisted upon, the "scatological energy of his anathemas"; but he well knew that every concession weakens and he refused to compromise: "All that is not exclusively, desperately Catholic has no other right than to be silent, being scarcely worthy of rinsing hospital chamber-pots or scraping the privies of a German infantry barracks." Now it is among the self-styled Catholics that his search for "priests who are brotherly to intelligences" met the worst enemies: "Never has there been anything so odious, so completely execrable as the contemporary Catholic world." They had repulsed him—him, "the poor man," "the admirably unfortunate" man, the "magnanimously desperate" man, proclaiming that "there is nothing greater than begging." He avenged himself in *L'Exégèse des lieux communs* by ruining the easy morality of stupidity, by throwing this warning to the bourgeois: "We are this, you and I, and naught but this, abysses!" He avenged himself by restoring its mystical character to the most commonplace reality: "Plausible tales no longer deserve to be told. Naturalism has decried them so far as to give rise, in every intellectual, to a famishing need of literary hallucination." The tales in *Sueur de sang*, the fierce frescoes of *La Femme pauvre* and of *Le Désespéré* which "is not a casual or timely tract but really a social satire," accomplish this prodigy of "naturalizing the Infinite in the most ordinary conversations." In *Histoires désobligeantes*, equally lyrical in the grotesque or the gruesome, he exhales all his rancours as a "frightful concentrator" and a "celestial cannibal."

At times he arose above this struggle, abandoning himself to his visionary genius. In *L'Ame de Napoléon* he has revealed in the Emperor "the face of God in the Shadows, the Beggar of the Infinite" and restored him his rank in the universal solidarity: "If then I think Napoléon might well be an iota flaming with glory, I am forced to say, at the same time, that the battle of Friedland, for example, could perfectly well have been won by a little girl three years old or by a vagabond centenarian asking God that his will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." In *Le Salut par les Juifs*, "the only one of my books I would dare offer God," he has testified for the Elder Race, resumed the dilemma of the Middle Ages, interpreted the parables, celebrated "creative Love whose breath is vagrant." In these grandiose mystical effusions all his hardness melts: "When one speaks amorously of God, all human words resemble lions gone blind and seeking a spring in the desert." For until the end this scornful vociferator, this artist so conscious of his rude genius, remained the man who dared confess: "In the presence of the death of a little

child, Art and Poetry really resemble very great poverties." There he truly attained the glory he promised himself: "Your stifled, permanent books, which are like nights of love, have consoled three or four desperate men."

7. THE PROVINCIAL AND REGIONALISTIC NOVEL

Dedicating his *Robe de laine* to Loti, Henri Bordeaux placed under Sand's and Fromentin's protection this novel in which, refining on Tennyson's mediocrity, he teaches that a poor woman does not without danger marry "one of those pitiless conquerors of the upper classes who do not tolerate being hampered by laws or by other men the moment they have, or think they have, the means of escaping them." Written throughout in this style, his copious work opposes Rousseau's vicar with a Savoyard churchwarden's profession of faith; and it is so narrow that little can be discerned but its limits. The author has defined its positive content in the dedication of *La Neige sur les pas* to Bourget: "It seems to me that if my novels have any common bond, this bond is feeling for the family." At times he has sought to force his talent in war books which are too cleverly or too candidly hasty; and in *La Nouvelle Croisade des Enfants* false naïveté leads to silliness; but, just as Savoy is his favourite setting and *gentiment* his most characteristic adverb, so the defence of the home is his theme, whether to show it as hierarchical, in the image of the eternal home (*La Maison*), saved by its head after a factitious crisis (*Les Roquevillard*), or reconstructed after an adultery (*La Neige sur les pas*). Full justice will have been rendered Henri Bordeaux when we add that he is Catholic in the sense in which this word is opposed to universal and that no one else has contributed more to associating the idea of the provincial novel with boredom.

René Bazin has aided him in this with a literary abnegation which is perhaps a virtue. Two works have made his name known: *La Terre qui meurt* relates the end of a family of farmers, in the Vendéan marshes, whose sons abandon the soil and which is saved by the marriage of the daughter with a farm-hand from the Bocage. *Les Oberlé* shows a divided Alsatian family whose son deserts from the German army to cross into France. These books borrowed, at the time, a certain dramatic accent from the circumstances. René Bazin has also written *Le Blé qui lève* and a long list of novels.

There are writer's qualities of another order in the voluntary effacement of René Boylesve: "My tastes are so ordinary I should be distressed not to be clad like everybody," he affirms in the preface to his first novel, *Le Médecin des dames de Néans*. In it he described the

awakening to life and to love of the beautiful inhabitant of a dull little Angevin town. Here were already seen the two aspects of his talent which inspired him with the following commentary on the title of his book of tales, *Nymphes dansant avec des satyres*: "The hesitation expressed by it between the grace of pure forms and the often distressed and bitter grimace of that malignity which I see on the face of the world, seems to me characteristic of a turn of mind to be found in all my books." From that, he invites us at times to listen to literary variations on all the subjects dear to the Alexandrianism of the early France or else to that pretty licentious intrigue on the banks of the Loire, *La Leçon d'amour dans un parc*, the work of an uneven Régnier. Convinced, on the other hand, that one must be a "faithful historian and good poet . . . two qualities without which it is indeed vain to write novels," he undertook to depict, in *La Becquée*, "the scenes and the figures common to the French provincial family," to rehabilitate "the ungrateful beauty of conservatism." *L'Enfant à la balustrade* watches the pettinesses of conservatism file by in the town dominated by the statue of Vigny; and *Elise*, losing caste through love, continues to run foul of them in the world of the "irregulars"; but the beauty of this rigid conservatism also lives again in *Mademoiselle Cloque*, an evocation, with Tours as a background, of an ultramontane and heroic old maid which is René Boylesve's strongest work.

Two writers killed in the war had brought their contribution to regionalistic literature. Louis Pergaud owed to his Franche-Comté the inspiration of the "village tales," told with a healthy humour exempt from heightening and from excessive realism, which compose *Les Rustiques*. His animal stories, *De Goupil à Margot*, dwelt particularly on the dramatic and menaced life of the beasts, siding with them against man. *Le Roman de Miraut* recounted the life of a dog, his misdeeds in domestic life, his triumphs in the field, his ineradicable affection for his master; and this picturesqueness attained emotion without falling into sentimentality. Louis Codet had, in *César Capéran*, painted a very sympathetic Gascon and, in *La Fortune de Bécot*, the romantic adventures of the gay and stalwart Chérubin of a light and voluptuous Rousillon. These tales, full of go, promised an original novelist.

Several have thus attached their names to our provinces. Brittany has Charles le Goffic and Anatole le Braz. Paul Arène has learned and repeated his stories (the best of which is the impassioned *Chèvre d'Or*) "under the good sun" of Provence. Jean Variot has delicately told and taken to the theatre, in *La Rose de Roseim*, the touch-

ing Alsatian legend. Emile Moselly, author of *Jean des Brebis* and *Le Rouet d'ivoire*, has specialized in describing the Lorraine country. *Les Grenouilles dans la mare*, the picture of a provincial election, proved he could bring the same superficial facility to various subjects. Jean Piot, before devoting his activity to combative journalism, had, in *Le Village*, given a realistic and lyrical picture of a corner of the Haute Marne.

The strong, rude *La Brière* of 1923 has recalled the fact that in 1911 Alphonse de Chateaubriant enjoyed a distinguished success with *Monsieur des Lourdines*, the moving story of a country gentleman in the Pontevin *bocage*, about 1840. Gaston Roupnell's *Nono* revives the roguish Burgundian good nature. *Le Caïet*, by Michel Yell, makes the monsters of the North grimace in the sinister light of a barracks. In *Filles de la Pluie*, André Savignon has described Ushant, "the lost island," or rather a few figures of Ushant women. Marc Elder's social novels have less relief than that *Peuple de la mer* in which he evokes dramas of envy, sensuality and death among the Noirmoutier fishermen.

Others have not been satisfied with a first picture. Pierre Villetard had, in *M. et Mme. Bille*, followed step by step the life of a family of Pont-sur-Loir to whom nothing happens but the little incidents of provincial life. He then led his hero—the type of the *petit bourgeois*—through the storm without this slight satire adding much to our knowledge of the war. Finally, with Lavandou as a setting, he proved, in *Le Château sous les roses*, that he was as capable as anyone of painting a little sentimental romance. Henri Bachelin is the painter of the Morvan where the honest figure of *Le Serviteur* stands forth, where, in *Juliette la Jolie* and in *Le Petit*, unfold the adventures of a girl-mother who experiences all the diversities of love without leaving her little town. Ernest Perochon had begun with *Les Creux de maisons*, a sombre picture of village misery under the "honest mist" of Bressuire and its surroundings. He was made famous by *Nêne*, the story of a servant-girl who discovers the ingratitude of men and of children—a grey tale relieved by the description of the curious sect of dissidents in the Vendéan Bocage. It is difficult to take seriously his *Chemin de plaine*, an aggressively elementary journal of a melodramatically caricatural school-teacher. It is natural that public favour should turn from such rustic novels to books without factitious plot—to the sombre pictures of Gascony drawn by Joseph de Pesquidoux in *Chez nous* and *Sur la Glèbe*, to *La Vie de Grillon* told as a philosopher by Charles Derennes, to H.-J. Fabre's *Souvenirs Ento-*

mologiques, especially minute, to Georges Pousot's lively *Roman de la Rivière*, to Gabriel Faure's delicate French and Italian *Paysages littéraires*.

Belgians and Swiss have had their share in this blossoming of the regionalistic novel. "These Gauls . . . are not foreigners in spite of the frontier," says Rosny, speaking of Camille Lemonnier's characters. Doubtless it is prudent to foresee considerable waste in this enormous production. The brutal Naturalism of *Happe-Chair*, the carnal mysticism of *L'Hystérique* and several straggling flashes of violence in *L'Amant passionné* will not save these books. There is a certain artifice in the horror of *Le Mort* and frescoes like *La Fin des Bourgeois* are not without a touch of trickery. Where he excels is in recreating the atmosphere of Furnes in *Le Petit Homme de Dieu*, in plunging the secular instincts back into a luminous nature once more (*Au Cœur frais de la forêt*, *L'Ile Vierge*); and no one will question the power of the landscape painter in *Le Vent dans les moulins* or the rugged grandeur of *Un Mâle*. There a savage love-drama unfolds between the poacher Cacheaprès and the farmer's wife Germaine. With its kermises, its brawls, its slow, wily old peasants, its vigorous, quarrelsome youths, with its broad symphony of field and forest, this novel is really the poem of Wallonie.

Compared with Lemonnier's work, Georges Eekhoud's pales a trifle. The author of *Mes Communions*, *Kees Dorik*, and *Les Libertins d'Anvers*, profoundly influenced by the Elizabethans some of whose dramas he has translated, has devoted a series of historical studies and novels to Belgium. Perhaps the scholar in him occasionally harms the creator. In *Le Cycle patibulaire* his partiality for beautiful instinctive brutes sometimes expresses itself with brutal candour, sometimes with the refinement of the Symbolist prose poem; and the fever of inspiration does not suffice to weld these diverse elements together. He has none the less erected a massive but impressive statue to Antwerp in *La Nouvelle Carthage* and merits Gourmont's praise: "He represents a race and a moment of this race."

There is no heaviness in André Baillon, rather a perpetual skipping which, in *Histoire d'une Marie*, recalls Charles-Louis Philippe's manner, in *En Sabots* Jules Renard's; but the latter narrative of a humble passive existence is told with an exact tenderness and these sketches of anti-intellectual life in Flanders give definitive form to savoury observations. Without sentimental emphasis, this art is penetrating as are also—at the antipodes of Naturalism—the Rimbaud-like notations of P. Desmeth's *Avec la Nuit*.

C.-F. Ramuz enjoys great popularity in French-speaking Switzerland. His *Jean-Luc persécuté* offers some vigorous engravings of rustic life. In *Terre du Ciel* the imagination is powerful and many evocative pages could be cited. The questionable part of this work is its style which, even in the novels, displays the inexhaustible abundance of the prose poem, *Le Chant de notre Rhône*, and mingles the broken tread of a pupil of Péguy or of Claudel with the picturesque provincialisms which give it its savoury weight.

Benjamin Vallotton is the creator of Potterat, a retired police-officer, interpreter of Vaudois commonsense, of its revolt against the violation of Belgian neutrality and against the order for Swiss neutrality. In addition to *A Tâtons*, a novel on the war-blind, he has described, in *Ceux de Barivier*, the tragic story of a Savoyard village during the struggle. The mocking humour of *Ce qu'en pense Potterat* is found again in his *Achille et Cie*, a satire on a family of profiteers installed in a historical château with their symbolical monkey.

8. THE ANALYTICAL NOVEL

From *La Princesse de Clèves* to *La Porte étroite* the analytical novel has produced such a succession of admirable models it is hard to imagine it neglected at any epoch. Ours has distinguished itself by an effort to renew its canvas, in order to avoid the dogmatic heaviness which is its stumbling-block.

In *L'Empreinte*, Edouard Estaunié has studied the grip of the Jesuits on a mind which escapes them, loses faith and tries to live free but which, having failed, decides to become a priest of the Lord he does not believe in. This Catholic story can be reproached with a certain Protestant rigidity, notably in the dilemma (man or priest) which leads to the dénouement. Without renouncing the powerful conviction of *L'Empreinte*, Estaunié broadens his horizon in *Les Choses voient*. In an old Dijon attic, three narratives, forming the story of three generations, are told by three of those pieces of furniture which are "the life of the dead": that of the Clock in which the psychological drama is as brutal as that of a detective story; that of the Mirror in which the object identifies itself so tragically with the paralysed being whose face it reflects; that of the Writing-desk which is much more conventional; and even if this attempt is not without heaviness and improbability, the figure of Noémie Clérabault stands forth with intense relief. The guiding idea of all Estaunié's work is already formulated here. Our avowed life is merely a façade behind which our deep life—the only important one—is hidden. He

has developed this in *La Vie secrète* where seven people discover at the same time that they have nothing in common with their public image, and in *L'Ascension de M. Baslèvre* where love awakens a great mystic soul in a commonplace man. No doubt this projection of the inner life is obtained only by the will of the author whose *coups d'état* are sometimes clumsy; but in Estaunié the method is always frank and honest. Its employment is justified by moving pages in which the problems of a tormented conscience are presented with rare loyalty. These noble qualities are found again in *L'Appel de la route*, a vigorous narrative in which three witnesses agree in proving that suffering, even though it be not born of a blind fatality but of the very life of conscious beings, remains on that account only a more dolorous enigma.

In his three books which would probably have been but the beginning of an ampler work, Émile Clermont (killed in battle in 1916) remains the novelist of scruple. As such he enters a French tradition: "This story," he writes of his *Laure*, "is almost ageless and dateless. It could have happened two centuries ago, and at most there is in it a certain tremor which makes it of to-day." The one blemish of *Laure* is not this tremor but rather the setting of false Barrèsian marble in which Clermont has situated this fine drama of the "envelopment of the infinite." Laure baffles her lover, turns him off on her sister, brutalizes her dying father, returns to trouble the household she has united and, after having directed several destinies, finds herself obliged to confess: "What I myself have done in my life has always been decided over my head." Her high mystical disinterestedness gives however a certain radiancy to the commonplace lives it troubles. Already, in *Amour promis*, the one real joy found by André was in the inner life analysed with "a mixture of passion and irreparable nonchalance." Haunted by "the waste of desires" and also by the "attraction of a more suffering and rarer voluptuousness," he communicated to Hélène his obsession for the absolute, and she died of it. Again, in that *Histoire d'Isabelle* in which he wished to broach the social problem, Clermont presented two superhuman figures, Geneviève intact and pure, "ennobling life by her renunciation," Isabelle feverish and disorderly, "whose soul is not proportioned to her surroundings, but adds something to the world." No one has expressed with more fraternal penetration this grip of the ideal which takes the colour from the face of life.

The sentiment of a balance destroyed has often inspired François Mauriac's novels also. In *La Chair et Le Sang* three young minds

are upset by contradictory love aspirations. In *Préséances* a brother and a sister have to decide whether they will accept the worldly ideals of the scions of the great Bordeaux business houses or whether they will lead their own original inner life. *Le Baiser au Lépreux* recounts, in a corner of the Landes, a thrilling drama where two obscure beings fight over again the great duel between Christianity and Nietzscheism. For each of the subjects treated by Mauriac is at least double: a human conflict and a problem of faith where is recognized the author of *Quelques Cœurs inquiets*, studies in religious psychology.

Disquietude is the natural domain of the analyst. André Obey, author of *Le Gardien de la ville*, has, in *L'Enfant inquiet*, described that terror of living in an over-sensitive child, which had already preoccupied Gilbert de Voisins. In *L'Enfant qui prit peur*, Voisins had shown the child too early initiated to human sorrow without an intelligent or mystical counterpoise. His *Esprit impur* presents the same demon of fear attacking an adult weighed down by a heredity of alcoholism and insanity. Voisins can rouse the moral problem even in that excellent novel of violent adventure, *Le Bar de la Fourche*. Among the gold-seekers of the Far West with its unleashed passions, the influence of the Bible is strangely exercised. It still dominates, paradoxically and efficaciously, *La Conscience dans le mal* where the Puritan Randal, a circus-manager, condemns the two lovers who have betrayed him, to life; and may it not be to this religious disquietude that can be ascribed the enormous success of *Réincarné and Hanté?* In these two "novels of the beyond," which he refuses to call novels of the imagination, Dr. Lucien Graux, author of *Les Fausses Nouvelles de la grande guerre*, has shown himself a spirited story-teller.

Others have sought the secrets of the human soul in less abnormal paths. Edmond Jaloux's first book, *L'Agonie de l'Amour*, studied—already in the double Parisian and Provençal setting—the case of the young man incapable of abandoning himself to the great love he invokes. Jaloux's best books are those in which he has been able to display the pastel delicacies which form the charm of *L'Incertaine* and *Le Reste est silence*—the story of an ill-matched couple observed by a child, while exalting "that life, at once spiritual and romantic, which has ever appeared to us the most beautiful of all." He likes to follow those "beginnings of a sentiment to which only circumstances are wanting or a certain inner warmth to realize itself completely." As a setting for *Fumées dans la campagne*, he chooses *Aix*, for *La Fin d'un beau jour*, Versailles, and in them he develops with a linger-

ing tenderness the dramas in which heroic dispositions are reabsorbed with a fine melancholy.

Le Diable à l'hôtel, by Emile Henriot, is an imaginative journey ("for imagination is the treasure of the poor") in a provincial town where "space is for nothing," and time also. His wanderings through Aix inspire him with amiable poems and witty portraits under the ægis of Stendhal and of Sterne, and he unites these "imaginary pleasures" with the fragile link of a delicate sentimental novel written round a little bronze-coloured shoe. In *L'Instant et le Souvenir*, the novel of a love-lorn soul incapable of happiness, and in *Les Temps innocents*, childhood memories forming "a novel in which the intrigue is null but which is not without unity," the spirit seems less spontaneous, the analysis keeping however the same slight and smiling gracefulness.

Charles Géniaux has placed his books in the most varied settings, from *La Bretagne vivante* to *Sous les Figuiers de Kabilie*. His favourite subject is the romance of an impossible love, whether it be gagged by the Lamennaisian pride of *La Passion d'Armelle Louanais* or condemned to despair, in *Les Cœurs gravitent*, by the laws which govern the world of souls as well as that of bodies. André Beaunier has hesitated between criticism and the novel. His books often try to unite the two forms under the same cover. In *La Poésie Nouvelle* (1902) he showed a sympathy for the young which has become somewhat blunted in *Les Idées et les Hommes*. He had in the meantime discovered that "need for having in the last analysis strengthened his reason only in order to hold it in submission," upon which he based the rather unconvincing fiction of *L'Homme qui a perdu son moi*. The transition is easy between his lively biographies of Chateaubriand's mistresses, of Mme. de La Fayette, of Sidonia de Lenoncourt and the most ingenious of his novels, *Suzanne et le Plaisir*, which is not a grand post-war fresco but the delicate portrait of a young woman led on from pleasure to love and to "a sad gaiety, romantic and disappointed."

Balzac's example has obsessed Binet-Valmer, inspiring him with a cyclic group for his various pictures of a world where he himself would pass as an observer, after the fashion of his Dr. Batchano. The solid part of his work is not however that in which the present moment outlives itself rather than lives in it again—for example, *Les Métèques*, a book not so much rich as confused in which the novelist's Machiavellianism renders the insufficiency of the characters the more striking. In *La Passion* the psychological interest carries the day. The somewhat artificial parallelism of the two crea-

tions, by the spirit and by the flesh, leads to a well-constructed drama. Binet-Valmer here continues that study of the seamy side of genius already begun in *Lucien* where he boldly threw upon an abnormal hero the light of an analysis led astray by no lie, even by the lies of the war through which all the protagonists in *L'Enfant qui meurt* have passed.

Edgar, an amusing kaleidoscope of frivolous Parisian life, shows how Henri Duvernois rejuvenates the analytical novel by means of the vaudeville. *Crapotte* makes us marvel at the amount of observation and fancy the careless gossip of a little kept woman can cover. *La Brebis galeuse* reveals, in its immediate utilization of current interest, the ingenuity of such monotony as well as at times the monotony of such ingenuity. The prettiest successes in this mocking vein are the brief tales of *Fifinoiseau*. There a happy chance, a setting, a minute of vigilance or of neglect suffice Duvernois to determine the unexpected detail which will complete the simplicity of a character or reveal its complexity.

Jean Girardoux has introduced into the novel the impressionism which had already triumphed in painting and in music. His *Provinciales* described, in stipple, the imaginative flights of a little boy in a village between Tours and Châteauroux. The same style, composed of trifles, carefully selected details, abrupt elisions, evoked adventures like that of *La Pharmacienne*, where intelligence and humour united to create a kind of new sensibility. In it were already to be found the abuse of mechanical comparisons, a great deal of affectation, that tone of the cultivated humanist and of the simpering little girl which will render a given touch absurd or charming according to the reader's disposition: "Death is so old it is addressed in Latin . . ." "If happiness is having lips ready to laugh, eyes ready to weep, and an immense hat with twelve feathers . . ."; but its spontaneity made even this mannerism poetic, distinguished it from the strained art of a Jules Renard and each of his images marked his originality: "Truth is quite naked, but she wears her nakedness like a uniform and leans on every well-curb to see in the water how it becomes her."

Giraudoux's style is sufficiently personal to dispense its author from romantic invention. It is enough for him to describe and the best pages of *Jacques l'Egoiste* are pictures of Paris when "the fountains of the Tuileries are already turned down like night-lights." For his war-books, *Adorable Clio* and *Lectures pour une Ombre*, a motto suggests itself: "Pardon me, O War, for having—every time I could —caressed thee!" One may detest the kind of elaboration which sums

up memories of Alsace, of the Marne or of the Dardanelles in impressions of this sort: "Evening borders this Alsatian land with a German sky, long and low, for it is the end of the remnant"; but it will be hard to remain insensible to the talent, capricious yet master of "its French words so pure," which animates simultaneously, in *La Nuit à Châteauroux*, three stages of a life all aquiver with the stirrings of a curiosity successful in stirring emotion in himself and in his readers. It is this style too which, in *Amica America*—notes of a mission to the United States—sometimes matches the moving sidewalk of which he speaks or, by dint of detailed precision, renders vague the "little girl stories" he relates.

Of these, *Suzanne et le Pacifique* is developed at greatest length. In this satire on the novel of adventure where the snarl of comparisons and analogies is unravelled with an adroit method, it would be easy to point out many factitious details; but is this enough to make us forgo enjoying that perfume of youthfulness, that imaginative suppleness which, on the island of Calixite, associates Claudel's fate with Suzanne's polished heels? Doubtless this grace would not suffice for us to dare to recall that such impressionism derives from Claude Monet and Claude Debussy; but Giraudoux is also the author of *Simon Le Pathétique*, a precious book in which the hero and the three heroines are not unworthy of such illustrious masters, a breviary of delicately sensual intelligence containing the confession of a duplicity which we could not reproach without condemning ourselves to exclusion from it: "I should prefer to know nothing of myself and not to tear from my eyes the bandage which bound also, gently pressed against my own, the head of love."

9. WOMEN NOVELISTS

It has often been remarked that, of all literary forms, the novel is that in which women succeed best. We have seen that *Le Visage émerveillé* and *Le Temps d'aimer* were not unworthy of the poems of Anna de Noailles and of Gérard d'Houville. Lucie Delarue-Mardrus has also known success as a novelist from the time of *Le Roman de six petites filles*, childhood memories alternatingly amusing and sentimental, to *L'Ex-Voto*, in which she evokes in Honfleur, her native town, the wild loves of a "little pirate."

Marcelle Tinayre is too often content to furnish her feminine readers with the agreeable, easy novel they expect, and no one will be surprised to note obvious titles in the list of her works: *L'Amour qui pleure*, *Avant l'amour*, *L'Ombre de l'amour*, *La Vie amoureuse de François Barbazanges*. Her style remains inexorably conventional

and clothes a thought which strives to be free and comprehensive, with a commonplace cloak. *Hellé* does indeed contain aspirations after beauty and justice transcending the ordinary love-story. Paganism too envelopes the rather commonplace adventure of *Perséphone* with great memories, and *La Maison du Péché* would deserve to survive if, in this thrilling story of a love crossed by Jansenism, the psychologist were not so often badly served by the writer. This absence of style is moreover the most sensible weakness in numerous feminine novels. That defect has left a provisional character to Daniel Lesueur's most conscientious pictures. It renders intolerable the loquacity of Marcelle Vioux, the gossip of Gabriel Réval, the inoffensive audacities of Renée Dunan. It spoils even the fresh Algerian evocations of Magali Boisnard (*Mâadith* and *L'Enfant taciturne*). It also arrests the reader of *La Mer Rouge*, a dramatic novel of Jewish manners and customs in Algiers by Maximilienne Heller. No one then will blame Balkis for having, in *Personne* and *En Marge de la Bible*, gone to school with Gide, then with truculent Symbolists before displaying, in a personal form, the qualities which will doubtless assure an originality in her next Oriental fictions.

Feminine sensibility could not remain deaf to the call of exoticism. Judith Gautier was one of the revealers of the Far East. Translator of *La Marchande de sourires* and of *L'Avare chinois*, she has, in *Les Parfums de la pagode*, given some of the prettiest legends of China and Japan. Jules Lemaître once discovered in Miriam Harry who has Jewish Slav and German blood in her veins and for whom French is an adopted language, an "Aïssé of the novel of these latter years." For a long time, from *La Conquête de Jérusalem* to *Tunis la Blanche*, she has painted Impressionist canvases. The adventures of *L'Ile de Volupté* and *La Divine Chanson* were associated also with exotic landscapes. She has lent her own sentimental and intellectual evolution to the *Siona* of her trilogy the first volume of which was appropriately dedicated to Lemaître "who delivered me from Romanticism."

Lucie Cousturier has, on the contrary, in *Des Inconnus chez moi*, undertaken to show how far our civilization is inferior to the fresh, new imagination of the Senegalese sharpshooters of whom she drew pretty portraits. Beginning with *Saada la Marocaine*, Elissa Rhaïs has shown that she kept of exoticism merely a superficial picturesqueness. Thus she has never risen above the alert journalism which animates certain descriptions in *Les Juifs ou la Fille d'Eléazar*. On the other hand, she has fallen into the most commonplace department-store Arabesque with three melodramatically prosaic tales in *Café Chan-*

tant. In vain would be sought there the penetrating accent, the spontaneous communion with the things and the beings of North Africa which will cause Isabelle Eberhardt's work to survive. Mussulman and Russian, the author of *Trimardeur* and *Dans l'Ombre chaude de l'Islam* easily reconciles Arab fatalism and Slav compassion: "We are all poor wretches and those who do not want to understand us are even poorer than we."

Neel Doff forms a natural transition between the exotics and the rebels. *Jours de la famine et de détresse*—this title sums up her whole inspiration. Her *Contes farouches* tells with savage brutality of wretched, tragic lives in Amsterdam, on the island of Walcheren and in the Campine. In *Keetje* the heroine occasionally leaves her Amsterdam and her Brussels to travel in Germany and in France; and in the same way the realism is touched at times with a noble artistic emotion and with a pity akin to Dostoïevsky's.

Universally known as a polemical writer, Séverine is the author of *Les Pages rouges*, of *Les Notes d'une frondeuse* and of numerous virulent articles. No book better reveals her talent and her great heart than her *Line* dedicated "to all those whose brow has been kissed, from the cradle, by revolt." This story of a little girl, "of a wild duck hatched in the barnyard," permits her to evoke with humour and passion, in an eloquent, often pert style, her own memories, the first awakening of a soul ever eager for justice, full of pity for all those who are oppressed, and harsh only for the enemies of free life and thought.

Magdeleine Marx's books have, up to the present, been the novels of the woman in search of herself—in *Femme* through voluptuous love, maternal love and Death; in *Toi* through men, the masses and God. The confusion of this quest is augmented by a lyric feverishness which is somewhat artificial, even if, as everything seems to indicate, it is spontaneously artificial.

Simpler but no less determined, Marguerite Audoux—who was brought up by the Sisters in an orphan asylum, then became a shepherdess in Sologne and finally a seamstress in Paris—has told the story of her life in *Marie-Claire* and *L'Atelier de Marie-Claire* with a remarkable sobriety and a feeling for the chosen detail admired by Philippe and Mirbeau. Her last book paints all the seamy side of "Paris, woman's paradise," and her Naturalism is a true realism because it is based upon a true thing: the very soul of the craft, more enduring than the ephemeral creatures who practise it.

"I am deceived in everything if I bore, for that is the sole right I have not considered mine." To this sentence of Aurel's in the preface to *Les Jeux de la flamme* frankly presenting the question, it is loyal

to reply that this so-called novel is terribly tedious. The monotony of the tone, even in the letters and dialogues, the puerile didacticism of a writer for whom everything that comes from her pen is equally sacred, soon manage to kill the interest at first aroused by the promise of a book "written in the eagerness to be true"; and he who is willing to read to the very end *Le Couple, essai d'entente*, where love-ornament, love-force and the power of the woman who reconciles Jesus and Nietzsche, are described in the same restless style, should expect no other reward than the perverse pleasure of having, at every page, been pitilessly convinced of a useless effort.

There has always been in Rachilde a candid appetite for violence, evident as early as *Monsieur Vénus*, "a materialistic novel" in which a young girl plays at the male whose instinct she feels towards a man-woman—a book very like those scarecrows which, when we approach them, we regret to find have usurped their reputation. In *L'Heure sexuelle* one of Cleopatra's lovers finds her in the form of a prostitute whom he is unable to wrest from her former lover just out of prison. Abandoned, there is nothing further left for him but to make "a little art out of all my grief"; but this art confines itself to piecing together the remains of Romanticism and of Symbolism. *Le Dessous* pits bourgeoisie and anarchy in a truly childish conflict. Childish too is the bogy picture of *Hors Nature* which seems composed of parodies of Villiers by Péladan. Rachilde has wished to be the Villiers of a perverse aristocracy. She appears above all its Bourget in *Le Grand Saigneur*, a novel about a vampire which terribly justifies the quip of one of its characters: "We wonder why women prefer the stories of the other world to the pleasures of this."

Between these studio truculences and the harmless prose of *Les Regeac* come the works which show in Rachilde a vigorous story-teller. Such is *Les Meneur de louves*, a tale of the time of Chilpéric, inspired by Gregory of Tours, an epic of the two princesses Basine and Chrodielde, of Harog, "first French knight" who lived, fought and died for his lady; and no one will question the sombre beauty of *La Tour d'Amour* where the agonizing life of the two guardians of the lighthouse of Ar-Men is powerfully described in an atmosphere of sexual madness and extravagant nightmare. There the tense effort of Rachilde has really attained its end, the creation of a spell.

Compared with these massive constructions, Colette's art may at first seem slight, since it is inspired solely by sensation; but her sensations are so profound and so subtle and she translates them with so precise a felicity, in so complete an abstraction of everything not sensation, that this body of work soon establishes its claim as one of the

most original of our epoch: "The earth belongs to him who halts an instant, contemplates and goes away. The whole sun is the property of the naked lizard which warms itself in it." Thus the more instinctive creatures, the animals, must be placed in the first rank of her characters. The *Sept Dialogues de bêtes* and *La Paix chez les bêtes* belong to them. With a witty, clairvoyant tenderness, Colette has immortalized Toby-Chien and Kiki-la-Doucette, and the cats which "play a trifle fiercely," so like us in pleasure and mystery. She has received the confidences of the learned animals and of the beasts transformed into trinkets. She has followed "the broken circles of the bat which squeaks as it flies, like a nail on a pane." She has shared their fierce desire for independence. When Lola, in *L'Envers du music-hall,* cries: "I'm not an imprisoned princess, but a bitch, a real bitch, with a bitch's heart," she expresses the rebellion of all Colette's beasts.

Of all her women, too. For if Colette finds resemblances between the beasts and "the Two Paws," it is not to disguise animals as men like the writers of fables. She excels, on the contrary, in combining them, in uniting the woman and the bitch, both jealous, in an awakening of instinct, in evoking "mingled arms and paws, a brief, furtive and fraternal embrace." One of her greatest merits is to have painted physical pleasure without flinching, neither glorifying nor shaming it. This aspiration, unique and complex, forms the charm of her heroines: Minne who "raises to her husband the flattering bruise of her eyes whence the mystery has fled"; the Claudine of *La Retraite sentimentale* "who turns away her attentive, confused eyes at the moment when she gives herself wholly"; the Renée of *La Vagabonde,* a "fox weary of having danced, captive, to the sound of music," who, in *L'Entrave,* confesses knowing "hours when I rather enjoy being a female"; Mitsou, concerning whom we share Lieutenant Bleu's astonishment "that a little girl, gladly naked, can hide so much of herself." This voluptuous movement, "the intelligent joy of the flesh which immediately recognizes its master," is the mainspring of Colette's books.

Should we call novels these narrations of novelized life in which men, as soon as they are in love, that is to say unified by desire and "their somewhat loose trickery," scarcely exist save for their physical differences? Maxime, Jean and Chéri are but pretexts for Renée and the touching Nounoune to love and to suffer. They take on again a relief only when they are released from love—when, like the actor Brague or the dubious Masseau, they form part of a setting. Painter of settings, Colette has proved her talent in the most diverse forms. "As if there was nothing urgent in the world but my desire to possess the marvels of the earth through my eyes," she has, in *La Retraite sen-*

timentale and *Les Vrilles de la vigne*, drawn landscapes delicately harmonious with her sensuality. She has beguiled the emptiness of *Les Heures longues* with fine sketches. She has described the picturesque *café-concert*, the lamentable wings, the tours, finally, mingling in the departures the sadness of a little homekeeping *bourgeoise* "with the brilliant dart of the serpent shedding its dead skin."

There is nothing less classical, in appearance, than this savage inspiration on which the style puts its artifice: "A little blue kohl between the lashes, on my cheeks the cloud of écru powder the colour of my skin, biting to perk up my mouth"; but Colette possesses another arm beside the derisory lipstick: "No other delirium than that of my senses. Alas! There are none whose truces are more lucid." No sooner freed than the "banana-coloured" arm seizes the pen of a born writer. Art guides the tender memory which makes the infallible phrase tremble: "A long, almost stationary, drowsy kiss—the slow crushing, one against the other, of two flowers in which the palpitation of the twin coupled pistils alone vibrates." Colette's prose has rhythms as pliant as creepers, and her caprice denies the monuments it has just constructed out of her sensations: "Make a sign, the wind will sit lightly on the dune, and will amuse itself, with a breath, in changing the form of the moving hills." Of the moving hills the vagabond has reared, more than one is already preserved from the whim of the wandering wind.

CHAPTER XI

SOME TENDENCIES

THIS chapter will not be a gallery of honour, an exhibition of contemporary masterpieces. Its aim is to bring together impartially—free later to discuss them partially—several prose-writers who exceed the limits of the novel or the essay and whose works seem sufficiently representative of the influences which operate upon French sensibility to-day.

1. FROM STENDHAL TO GOBINEAU

If Bourget undertook to rewrite his *Essais* after thirty years, he would not have to diminish Stendhal's place in them; but perhaps he would have to increase that of Henri Beyle, or rather of Arigo Beyle, *Milanese*, that engaging being, half real, half invented by his brother Henry Brulard. For, however lasting his romantic creations may be, the numerous documents published since 1880 have confirmed the presentiment that the man in his work was even more attractive than the novelist. The master psychologist of *Le Rouge et le Noir* is no longer questioned. The pages on crystallization have become classics. Thus our admiration, which would consent to sacrifice nothing of "his whole world," prefers to explore the voluntarily mysterious narratives like *Armance*, the scintillating *Lucien Leuwen* in which Stendhal gives a double picture of himself as the rich young man he was not and the intelligent father Fate refused him, the chapters of *La Chartreuse* and the *Chroniques italiennes* in which he freely expresses his religion of energy, his passion for "*l'arte de godere*, the art of enjoying life." Above all the fervour of the Beylists finds food in his autobiographies, from the *Journal* in which he forms himself "analytically" and by "reading in his sensations," to the *Souvenirs d'égotisme* where he who, seeking "whatever is real in love," had so often the aspect of an "unhappy lover," comments each fiasco and each triumph of his twofold career. There his head is really as he defined it, "a magic lantern." In it reappears a world where Stendhal is the Fabrice or the Julien. Nothing surpasses the interest of these two confessions, unless perhaps it be the book which an ever-increasing number of votes designate as Stendhal's masterpiece, the *Vie d'Henri*

Brulard, an incomparable document of which the author was able to say: "I make great discoveries concerning myself in writing these memoirs. The difficulty is no longer to find and to tell the truth, but to find who will read it." Nowhere has Stendhal, "that precursor and admirable diviner" hailed by Nietzsche, more completely mastered the high ideal formulated by him in his reply to Balzac: "I do not wish to fascinate the reader's soul by artificial means . . . I seek to tell truthfully and clearly what takes place in my heart." Thus is explained why his influence should henceforth go counter to those with whom his first success was associated. He turns his present disciples from Flaubert's massive masonry, from oratorical systematizations in the manner of Taine, from the arbitrary Bourget. He had fixed two rendezvous for posterity: 1880 and 1935. Stendhal's greatness will be better measured when, in him chosen by 1880 as a master of discipline, 1935 will have recognized a master of liberty.

Whoever intends to test the sincerity of his Beylism will probably be obliged to carry it as far as Gobinism. Arthur de Gobineau, unrecognized like Stendhal by his contemporaries, has since then enjoyed a just revenge. For Renan and Taine he was merely a curious character. Dying in 1882, quickly popular in Germany where he influenced Wagner, Nietzsche and Chamberlain, he was not revealed to the larger French public until 1904. He has become, now, for Stendhal, on the shelves of our libraries, the companion Mérimée never deserved to be. No doubt the theorist Gobineau indubitably was has prevented his century from justly recognizing the writer we love in him. Enamoured of "moral geology," he devoted himself to the pursuit of a morality—beauty, strength and intelligence—destined for an élite. He thought he could find this élite turn by turn in the race, the individual and the family. Starting from the "Aryan," he only succeeded, through the *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, the *Histoire des Perses* and that of *Ottar Jarl, pirate norvégien*, in coming back to M. le Comte de Gobineau whom, to tell the truth, he had never left to any great extent.

To whom, however, he had annexed the universe. Diplomatist and great traveller, he revealed Babism to the Occident and translated the *Discours sur la Méthode* for the Persians, taking good care not to carry them Spinoza and Hegel, "Asiatic minds which could not introduce really new elements among them," thus favouring the mixtures which, as a theorist, he deplores and which, as an artist, he enjoys. For if he holds that the origin of the sensual arts is "hidden in the blood of the coloured races," he quickly resigns himself to the disciplining of this obscure instinct. "Artistic genius, equally foreign to

the three great types, sprang up only as a sequel to the union of the whites with the blacks." That is our consolation for many "degenerations." He did not moreover claim for himself the least infallibility: "My theory has been what it was, with its weakness and its strength, its exactness and its share of errors, like all human divinations." Thus he wrote thirty years after the first edition of the *Essai;* but, from the beginning, a sceptical epigram tempered his dogmatism. "I absolutely reject that method of arguing which consists in saying every Negro is stupid, and my principal reason for rejecting it is that I should be forced to recognize, by compensation, that every European is intelligent; and I am a hundred leagues from such a paradox." To the last, as indicated by the preface to *Amadis*, he contended that curiosity thus directed is the mind's staunchest virtue: "What is learned is only a door opened on immensity. The more openings there are, the further the look penetrates it."

This irony, with this ease of understanding, is Gobineau's most precious quality as a story-teller. In him as in Stendhal the style is inseparable from the narrative—the narrative from the narrator. Here, however, is seen Gobineau's weakness. He often lacked what he declared, in an admirable scene in *La Renaissance*, Raphael's supreme prerogative, he lacked "happiness." His form possesses all the charm of improvisation, of the brilliant conversation which made too great a demand for thinking upon his hearers. It rarely attains that stark originality, perfect adequation of the thought and of the words, which is almost constant in Stendhal—a misfortune all the greater because it manifested itself especially in the works where Gobineau aims at literature, as for example his *Amadis*, an allegorical chivalric poem in which there is everything save poetry.

Yet there are many resemblances between this tedious *Amadis* and *L'Abbaye de Typhaines*, which makes very agreeable reading. The reason is that here Gobineau improvises, like an aristocrat who, in spite of his esteem for the bourgeois Simon ("he belonged visibly to the race of the strong!"), never forgets he is telling a story of churls. Gobineau's tone is inimitable when he dominates his subject. Hence the brilliance of *Adélaide* in which a man who is nothing but a "badly constructed steam-engine" succumbs under the tenderness of a woman and of a "little Satan." Hence the relief, in *Mademoiselle Irnois*, of "the positive man," Comte de Cabarot, and of the protagonist, "an indifferent rogue," but "sufficiently inept." Hence the irresistible movement of *Scaramouche* in which he amuses himself by conducting mere puppets through an outworn plot "without wearying the reader with any digression . . . without the aid of any psycholog-

ical analysis." A courteous contempt is at the base of this first Gobineau. At thirty, writing *Ternove*, he chooses as his hero a young scatterbrain, enjoys taking him to pieces, then leaves in the lurch "this pygmy crying because he had wished to play the part of Alcides." When he abandoned fiction for ethnography, M. de Gobineau had no illusion: "He knew that the heart denies itself the frankest remedies and that, once it starts, it must be given the line like a struggling fish." He knew too that "the blond are endowed with a well-known power of obstinacy." He travelled, from Newfoundland to Teheran and from Athens to Stockholm.

He returned to light literature in 1872 with *Souvenirs de voyage* quickly followed by the works which will make his name famous: *Les Pléiades* (1874), *Nouvelles asiatiques* (1876), *La Renaissance* (1877). It is probably with the *Souvenirs de Voyage* one should begin reading Gobineau. *Le Mouchoir rouge* shows how he treats a subject which might have been Stendhalian. *La Chasse au caribou* is one of the triumphs of his humour. *Akrivie Phrangopoulo* is fragrant throughout with a diffused irony. The six Asiatic tales add to that absence of prejudice which characterizes Gobineau an accent of real tenderness. Asiatics were for him what the Italians were for Stendhal. He saw them as "lovers of the unexpected . . . eager for emotions . . . full of passion finally for the present sensation." As he did not belong to the "parasitic sect" of the moralists, he loved their picturesque violences described in *Les Amants de Kandahar*. His irony made itself their accomplice in *La Guerre des Turcomans*. Their poetry—that of the Arabian Nights—bloomed again in *L'Illustre Magicien*. Lastly, he has drawn that definitive picture of their nomad existence, *La Vie de voyage*.

Thereby Gobineau is great. He is great also in that extraordinary psychological and lyrical novel, *Les Pléiades*, where he presents in the most alluring form, with perpetual flights of imagination and of mischief, the profoundly human element in his theories by opposing the morality of the masters and that of the slaves. *Les Pléiades* tells the adventures of "three calendars, king's sons," who haughtily cleave the crowd of idiots, rogues and brutes. This book is Gobineau's *Chartreuse* and Stendhal would have loved Prince Jean-Théodore. He would have approved that, after this epic poem of honour and asceticism, Gobineau should have gone to ask the Italians of the great period for confirmation of his dearest ideas. *La Renaissance* forms a series of historical scenes for which certain personages, Machiavelli and Michelangelo, serve as a spiritual link. When Gobineau wrote it, he had reached "one of those tablelands where the flowers become rarer

and the horizons more severe." He saw the beauty of those tumultuous souls, full of "the eternal splendour of life." He extolled the energy of Cæsar Borgia "before the lion's muzzle," that of Michelangelo who "wished to seize nature by each of its anfractuosities at the same time," of all the men who cried: "As long as I exist the world is mine! My foot is on it!" Admirable by the vigour of its dramatic accent, the breadth of its political and artistic views, *La Renaissance* is the magnificent breviary of that exacting heroism defined by Gobineau: "The great law of the world is to live, to grow and to develop what is most energetic and greatest in oneself, so that from any sphere whatsoever one can always strive to pass into a larger, airier, higher one."

"Pass before us and forgive us our happiness." Thus, before a sick man, the voice of Dostoïevsky's Nuichkine replies to the proud voice of the individualist. Our age, which is not deaf to the appeal of Stendhal and of Gobineau, has listened also to the lesson of renunciation taught by the man of genius who wrote *The Idiot*. It knows that, at certain hours, sacrifice crowns self-assertion without annihilating it. "Ideas," wrote Gobineau, "are cross-roads whence depart a vast number of very divergent routes." Perhaps a great artist will be born to-morrow at these cross-roads.

2. INTELLIGENCE AND INTUITION

"Twice two make four is already no longer life, gentlemen. It is the beginning of death . . . I agree that twice two make four is a very pretty thing; but, at bottom, twice two make five is not bad either." In this passage of *The Underground Spirit*, Dostoïevsky had evoked the duel between intelligence and intuition under the form in which it presents itself to the artist. At the end of the nineteenth century Henri Bergson's philosophy came to furnish the champions of intuition new reasons for believing in their goddess. Perhaps their faith simplified a rather complex thought. It was an inevitable deformation and since then we have known a literary Einstein and a literary Freud whom these savants would disavow. Here again, following Mallarmé's advice, the man must be taken with the legend.

"The history of the evolution of life," writes Bergson, "shows us, in the faculty of comprehension, an annex of the faculty of acting." Intelligence can perfectly well comprehend time, it will not grasp "duration in its original purity." Returning to the Pascalian criticism, he brings the intelligence back to the geometrical spirit; but he observes that life has developed along other lines. Appealing to the forces of instinct and intuition could there not be obtained "a con-

sciousness coextensive with life," capable of re-creating of it "a vision integral, though doubtless evanescent"? Thus armed, the vital movement would consist "in an irresistible charge capable of overthrowing every resistance and of overcoming many obstacles—perhaps death itself." It is not surprising the poets should have seen in these lines an echo of Rimbaud's motto: "Become a visionary." Bergson contributed still further to their liberation when he destroyed the notion of disorder, substituting for it that of an artistic order "which is the quality of genius, originality and consequently unforeseeability even." From this doctrine, the zealous disciples found some difficulty in extracting a system of morals. The Symbolists on the contrary, even the Dadaists, claim the support of the thinker who has denounced the crimes of intelligence and of its instrument, language. "The brutal word . . . crushes or at least covers over the delicate or fugitive impressions of our individual consciousness."

The end of Bergsonism is the search for the liberty residing in the depths of the ego. Several have remarked that this analyst, implacable as an examining magistrate, did not possess the style they might have expected from his doctrine. It is only to awaken or to extol this liberty that Bergson's prose, so firm in its subtlety, consents to adorn itself with an image, whether he wishes, in the *Essai sur les données immédiates*, to invite the consciousness to sweep away the dead leaves encumbering the surface of its pool; to show at the apex of the cone, in *Matière et Mémoire*, the contact between the body and the mind, or to magnify finally, in *L'Evolution créatrice*, the grandiose Wagnerian cavalcade of integral life.

"I offer my readers the effort of a thought which seeks to escape from the constraint of what has previously been constructed for everyone, and which wishes to find something personal." This horror of the ready-made everywhere expressed by Georges Sorel is one of the reasons for his Bergsonism. He is Bergsonian by virtue at once of his "strong metaphysical preoccupations" and of his Pragmatism. He was capable of contradicting himself violently without his essential characteristics ever being altered. Dreyfusist and Syndicalist, the author of *Les Illusions du progrès* and of *La Décomposition du marxisme* could appear reactionary when he declared the failure of Marx, the inadequacy of the remedies whereby Proudhon thought to heal the complex evil of modern society, the moments when Jaurès flung across the gulfs the fragile footbridge of his eloquence. To incriminate him would be to fail to recognize the pessimistic conception upon which the whole of this study rests. Deceived by the men in whom he put his confidence, he preserves his ideal intact.

This ideal Sorel takes for granted when he concludes that "the difficulty of modern physicists arises from the fact they dare not generally admit to themselves, very explicitly, that science and nature form two worlds separated by irreversible phenomena," when he approves of the condemnation of Socrates, when he undertakes to popularize the Bible—"the one book which can serve to instruct the people and initiate it to the heroic life"—when he writes his passionate *Plaidoyer pour Lénine*. Sorel is haunted by hero-worship. His pessimism and his optimism become reconciled in the vision of a tragic catastrophe whence shall spring a new heroism: "Let us hail the revolutionaries as the Greeks hailed the Spartan heroes who defended Thermopylæ." Sorel discovered an obstacle to the realization of his dream. The chiefs of the proletariat obey an "intellectualistic philosophy." Now reason is the negation of enthusiasm. He was then led to celebrate the sole creation of the spirit which escapes the control of the intelligence—the myth. The myth of the struggle with Satan made the Christian martyrs and ascetics. The myth of the class struggle will make the proletarian martyrs and ascetics. The latter will triumph like the former because "the idea of the general strike produces an absolutely epic state of mind." Thus is accomplished the union of metaphysics and of action which gives Sorel's books, and particularly the introduction to *Réflexions sur la violence* where it is completely stated, the honour of really representing "what is best in modern consciousness—the torment of the infinite."

"Democracy has turned to account all the illusions which have misled our elders. It works incessantly to spread errors which insure its domination." The democracy here attacked by Sorel in the name of Syndicalism is equally combated by the Royalists who have undergone the Sorelian influence. Georges Valois' *D'un Siècle a l'autre* shows this evolution from anarchy to order; but the return to a Catholic and classic conservatism by no means excludes in Valois the lyric enthusiasm which animates *Le Père* or the deliberate audacity which, denouncing the sophisms of Liberalism and of Marxism, proposes, in *L'Economie nouvelle*, the plan of a "realistic economy" based upon this unrecognized truth: "The creations of the mind are at the beginning of all things."

In 1907, Péguy's hospitality caused *Les Préoccupations des physiciens modernes* to be preceded by a foreword in which Julien Benda noted how, in Sorel's explanation, the modern savant, "from an observer becomes an experimenter, a workman."

In 1912, in *Le Bergsonisme ou une Philosophie de la mobilité*, Benda

combated Sorel and Bergson as a pamphleteer. Fighting foot by foot the gratuitous assertions of the "new dogma," he stressed the confusion of the Bergsonians as to the sense of the word "intuition" and triumphantly demonstrated that "what Bergson calls Intuition is simply intelligence, in opposition to a kind of bureaucratic functioning of the mind" for which he arbitrarily reserves this name. Author of the *Dialogue d'Èleuthère* and of that eloquent novel *L'Ordination* in which the "erethism of the mind" is opposed to the emotion of the heart, Benda proved that for him intelligence was not the faculty of dead matter but rather "thought in action, lively cerebration, passional intelligence." This creative flame burns less intensely in *Les Amorandes*. It is scarcely to be found in the three tales composing *La Croix de Roses*, simple illustrations of the amusing dialogue which precedes them. Benda has settled down in the controversy. *Les Sentiments de Critias* develops his attacks against the "pathetic philosophy" and makes a piquant inventory of the ideas of Germanic origin recently imported into France. He also returns to the criticism of contemporary æsthetics which he had already begun in *Le Bergsonisme* ("from this point of view Bergson's fame is the same phenomenon as Bataille's") and which he has completed in *Belphégor*. There he denounces the taste of present French society for "mystic emotion . . . its horror of the rational . . . its frenzy for making intelligent works a pretext for emotion." He implacably pursues, even in France and in Gide, the *libido sentiendi*, unmasks "the romanticism of the reason," finally condemning himself to silence for fear of ending on "a romantic antithesis."

"Intuition is the seat of all the intelligences." Thus pronounces Andre Suarès without this approbation bringing much support to the Bergsonian thesis. For Suarès has rarely resisted the vast sonorous formulas which must always be verified before being quoted, so easy are they to turn when the inversion does not involve a hiatus. The temptation is great to imitate so artificial a prose which is better for the ear than for the brain in certain adventurous comparisons: "Science is great only for rendering service. It is to art and to poetry, which express the sole creative activity, what woman is to man . . . innocence and first youth are flower in the flower, the mandarine in the orange . . ." Certain models haunt Suarès: Richard Wagner with whom his whole work echoes; Shakespeare-Prospero whose eulogy fills his *Poète tragique;* the Dostoïevsky of the *Trois Hommes;* Pascal, "the great Nihilist," of whom he has drawn an admirable portrait, lending him his own belief that heart and life alone

count, finding in him that "asceticism of the heart" which he calls a discipline, leading his friend, M. de Séipse, to make the pilgrimage to Port-Royal. Shakespeare, Dostoïevsky, Pascal—what masters for detecting false eloquence! "They make me laugh with their accusation of rhetoric. Not one of them hates it half as much as I do." Certainly he is sincere in forgetting there exists a Wagnerian rhetoric which can slip even into the moving *Sur le mort de mon frère*, "a tender mass, on the altar of death"; but it must certainly be admitted that no one has shown himself more terribly dogmatic, more ponderously obstinate in barren polemics, more "school-masterish" through the reiteration of his arrogant affirmations. "Thus," he writes, "I ennoble the game, before I enter it." Why does his intemperate romanticism always succumb to the desire of entering it?

Nevertheless, in his numerous essays *Sur la Vie*, what critical acuteness when nothing blurs his artist vision! Look at his commentaries on Baudelaire and Stendhal, his description of Ingres' sketch for the portrait of Mme. d'Haussonville, his parallel between Culture and Civilization, Sultan Désir's visit to the Russian Ballet, his analysis of the Debussy recitative—"astonishing music which seems the emotion of the idea in the transparent sheath of the word." Already, we who have accepted with sympathy all his work—*Le Livre de l'Emeraude*, *Le Bouclier du Zodiaque* and *Tolstoi vivant*—know that this voluntary monument will crack; but we are sure the future will keep certain frenzied cries from *La Tragédie d'Elektre et d'Oreste*, many an impassioned meditation from the chronicle of Caërdal (in *Essais et Portraits*), the page from the *Voyage du condottière* on Cremona and Monteverde, the unique *Cressida* finally in which love assumes all its masks—voluptuous desire, buffoonery, murderous folly, inaccessible smile—for the glory of the heroine who walks towards him "with an unsteady step, like a hesitant Victory, head high," while Suarès chants the hymn of his whole life: "It is in desire must be sought the secret of the flesh, obscure to itself; but the soul too is a rose-garden for desire. Where the magic of voluptousness has more than once failed, the grace of the heart makes it blossom.

3. ART AND THE PEOPLE

To invent a school of "social art" would, like every false classification, be an easy thing. More faithful to reality, more useful for knowledge of contemporary thought will be the successive study of five prose writers for whom the spectacle of the people has presented, at the same time as the social problem, an artistic problem.

At the outset a book deserves to hold the attention through its evidential value. Lucien Jean was the very fraternal master of Charles-Louis Philippe. Valois has signalized his rôle as a "precursor" and the fact that, uniting the *nouvelles* and critical notes which compose the volume *Parmi les Hommes*, his friends in 1910 believed they "were assembling precious materials." They were not wrong. For if the tales *Dans le Jardin* spring from that "music" style which Verlaine called "literature," many *Notes* on the political and literary events of the first years of the century lay bare the ill from which that generation suffered ("we say nothing because we dare say nothing, because we dare judge nothing; we know too many things") and indicate the remedy: "it is essential for us to say *yes* and *no* to each thing if we do not want to perish." An acute critic, Jean signalized the duet between the Neitzschean influence and that of Dostoïevsky. "Poor city-dweller," his *Souvenirs de l'Hôpital* and his *nouvelles* are like sonatas on Philippe's themes with a more resigned sensuality, a more meditative anarchy, with the same affectations in *L'Enfant prodigue* and a similar skill in stirring the dolorous mystery of humble lives in *Un Vieil Homme.*

Charles-Louis Philippe's work is often the story of his life, always the story of his thought. Born poor, he wished to present literature with the portrait of the Poor Man, whether a peasant of his native Bourbonnais in *Charles Blanchard* and *Le Père Perdrix*, or, in *Bubu de Montparnasse*, *Marie Donadieu* and *Croquignole*, one of the dubious waifs of that Paris of which he has engraved precious wood-blocks. His most finished pages are to be found in those of his books which, not being novels, needed no arrangement: *La Mère et l'Enfant* where his recollections are shrouded with deep feeling, where the real and the imaginary mingle tenderly; *Charles Blanchard* which describes the childhood of his father—to whom he owes the best *Contes du Matin* —and also the childhood of the Poor Man, the struggle of human life against cold, darkness, the expenses which menace Bread, the revelation of poverty before a merry-go-round, escape through work. Now is it not significant that, caught between the desire to paint a man and the desire to paint a type, Philippe never finished *Charles Blanchard*, that he even wrote some chapters of a "happy" Charles Blanchard?

He was not unaware of the complexity which permitted very contradictory quotations to be extracted from his *Lettres de jeunesse:* "The day of gentleness and of dilettantism is past," he announced. "Now barbarians are needed." He was not a barbarian however: "There is a terrible thing for me to know: whether this story will end

with life and I shall at length become the man I should like to be—or whether, as usual, I shall compromise with a book! To be merely a man of letters—I am fed up on it!" He remained one nevertheless and the three decisive events of his evolution were his meeting with three writers, Dostoïevsky, Nietzsche, Claudel. For if he evoked poverty and suffering, he never ceased to find the certainty and the joy they bring.

The commonest misinterpretation is to represent him as a tender-hearted panegyrist of all the slums. He himself encouraged this error in the passages of *Bubu* where his evangelical mysticism casts memories of Jesus upon the prostitute Berthe, when he denounces a world "in which individual charity is powerless because love and money exist." He has spread over his early works too much of "that tearful, melancholy pleasure which is for me the greatest of pleasures." Of this commiseration which, in *Quatre Histoires de pauvre amour*, in *La Bonne Madeleine et la Pauvre Marie*, seemed deplorably affected, his style has kept traces. The garret in *Croquignole* is bounded by the prettinesses of a sentimental Jules Renard, "to such an extent that it is thus we should express ourselves: the window of the room opened on a sewing-machine." Even the firm prose of *Charles Blanchard* accepts some affectations: "The bread he had eaten had made him grow. The bread itself warred with the bread!" His heroines, Berthe, Marie, Angèle, bow passively to destiny. Each novel repeats "the sad fall of a virginity—the death of an idea confronted by life" of which he spoke in the *Journal de la vingtième année.* There is nothing, not even his habitual process of composition by wavering juxtaposition, which does not seem to justify this legend of sentimentality—against which he protested. "I am perhaps nearer Nietzsche than Dostoïevsky," he replies to Henri Vandeputte after an article on *Bubu;* and, in a letter to André Ruyters, he denies being a "crippled socialist" who blasts all his characters with apathy.

On this point he saw clearly. Philippe is not a barbarian, even taking this word in the sense in which he applied it to the author of *The Possessed;* but he was not without egotism—the egotism of the creators. His short life was haunted with a dream of sensuality. As early as the *Quatre Histoires* he showed "the thick cells of touch in excitation" and in his three Parisian novels, the imagination satisfies the desires of his flesh. More precisely, he portrays his other self. Bubu, Raphael and Croquignole—three images of the barbarian Philippe could not be—brutally ravish the women whom Pierre, Jean and Claude—all three much nearer the real Philippe—do not succeed in keeping: "A woman is always what we need . . . Jean sought

about petticoats a vague tenderness or stimulant." This preoccupation explains why the artistic balance, so dramatically maintained in the atrocious ending of *Bubu*, is destroyed in *Marie Donadieu* where Philippe intends to give the best rôle to Jean Bousset, more exactly to formulate through his mouth his will to break the carnal jail: "I remember Dostoïevsky speaks of the living life and says it ought to be quite simple, that the day someone has discovered it we shall be astonished at it." And undoubtedly there remains an abyss between this aspiration and the sovereign amplitude of *The Brothers Karamazov;* but Dostoïevsky lived long enough to become the reassembler of the Russian soul, while Philippe died at thirty-four.

Not without having stated the conflict of his instincts and his mind in a more subtle form. In *Croquignole*—an enormous farce which ended logically in two suicides—Philippe paints three pictures of the Poor Man: Croquignole, suddenly enriched, gives free rein to his joy of living, and tramples indifferently the meagre happiness of Claude Buy who dared hope for love. Félicien, at their side, takes refuge in a prolix morality: "We, who are poor, need to be right." One would say that here Philippe, liberated, no longer has any kinship with his heroes save through the ambiguity which made him call poor "the man who is incapable of utilizing happiness"—the ambiguity which permitted him to reconcile Nietzsche and Dostoïevsky—the ambiguity —or rather a new sense of the contradictions in life—which dictated the two versions of *Charles Blanchard:* "Perhaps he was tired of having borne so many days." . . . "He was happy to be a part of a world which possessed such marvels." Gide rendered full homage to this mystery when he wrote, the day after Philippe's death: "He bears in him the wherewithal to bewilder and surprise, that is to say to endure."

In a pamphlet dated 1920, *L'Art et le Peuple,* Elie Faure thus defines his thought: "The people is a beginning. Art is a conclusion. The pearl does not make the sea. It is the sea that makes the pearl." Thanks to this antithesis, Faure is able to believe simultaneously in art and in the people, "a reserve of innocence for the species." As early as 1914, he celebrated in *Les Constructeurs* Lamarck, Michelet, Dostoïevsky, Nietzsche and Cézanne who incarnated the "sense of life." *La Conquête,* a miscellany of didactic and poetic essays, proclaimed that "civilization is a lyric phenomenon," extolled Don Quichotte, "free man," taught living as an artist and acting as a "conqueror." His war books, *La Sainte Face* and *La Roue,* demonstrate that war, "sinister caricature of love . . . is the terrible means whereby collec-

tivities have at their disposal, for self-conquest, what dramas of love, lyricism and intelligence conquer from the individual." We feel the vicinity of Nietzsche and Sorel, the one inspiring his *Napoléon*, painted "in a state of lyrical intoxication," the other his conviction "that a popular mysticism aspires towards something other than an appeal to peace and gentleness." Added to this is the influence of Emerson and of Whitman in the book where Faure best expresses his doctrine, *La Danse sur le feu et l'eau*, dedicated to Michel de Montaigne with this motto: "Everything should be taken tragically, nothing seriously." Apprized of the personal reasons which incline Elie Faure to "the admirable gossip," one will enjoy the passionate eloquence of his *Histoire de l'art* "conceived as the lyric narrative of the spiritual adventure of men determined to conquer the mystery which inhabits them"; and in the fundamental ideas of *La Danse*—an apology for style, a eulogy of the Just Man, "most immoral of men," a grandiose "ascent of the crowds in history"—there will be recognised the Nietzschean individualism and Dostoïevsky's patriotism placed at the service of a socialism whence shall spring "the second of harmony . . . the superior equilibrium" of the heroes.

Let us open Dostoïevsky once more, in the *Journal d'un écrivain* this time: "All your attempts *to transform yourselves into simple workmen* will be but a masquerade. You are too complex to become moujiks. Try rather to raise the moujiks to your complexity. It will be better than all the comedies of *simplification*." Like Elie Faure, Jean Richard Bloch has heard the master's lesson. Founding, in 1910, *L'Effort*, a "technical review of art and humanity," he wished it to be less sympathetic than combative," and in it the influence of Sorel corrected that of Rolland even before its expansion into *L'Effort libre*, a "review of revolutionary civilization." Bloch has since collected his articles, "first essays for a better understanding of my time," under the title of his manifesto, *Carnaval est mort*. Carnival is dead because Lent is dead. There is no longer any art because there is no longer any faith. It is urgent to create a new faith from which shall flow a new art. Thus Bloch reacted against the discouragement of his elders. His prop, mystic and steadfast, he saw, not in the struggle of classes, but in the union of the democratic tradition and the proletariat for "a new civilization" where "the happy life and modern man" sung by Whitman should blossom. Bloch sought these realities, in the *Premier Livre de contes*, through applied Unanimism, schematic Symbolism, the *scherzo à la* Kipling, humour and pathology. Though not equally successful, all his stories have the same probity. Above all he has bent towards his race,

sounding its fitness to guide this progress still further. In *Lévy* he had evoked with striking relief the supple patience of the Jew who, from the profoundest humiliation, raises himself triumphantly . . . *Et Cie*, a Balzacian novel the plot of which is not its essential feature, repeats on a vaster scale the analysis of this Jewish strength in the story of a family which is at the same time a business house. The true drama consists in instilling into all the sound members of this group the sense of collective unity, the need for rejecting the seductive imaginings (which are perhaps in their way truths) in order to recruit themselves in a double tradition: fidelity to a race which will prolong its lasting virtues, fidelity to the work well done which assures man's dignity.

"The workman no longer loves his craft, and this fact shakes the world." Starting from that statement, Pierre Hamp has undertaken the story of *La Peine des hommes*, an epic of work at the beginning of the twentieth century. *Marée fraîche* follows the fish from the trawl-net of Boulogne to the great Parisian restaurant. *Vin de Champagne* begins among the glass-blowers and vine-dressers to end in the phlegmatic drunkenness of the London Club. These vigorous frescoes with their symbolical characters justify the rude reminder: "We live by the sufferings of others." Here is already seen the whole of Hamp's art, highly concerted, rectifying Naturalism with Impressionism, very slightly objective notwithstanding the dryness of his statistics, dominated by the declaration in *Gens:* "You must love two things: justice and your craft."

The north of France is inseparable from this work. Hamp owes it the inspiration of the *Contes*. He has there situated *Le Rail* which envelops the technical description of a railway accident and the detailed account of a strike of railway-men in the vast poem of daily work at the station. Lille is the setting of the most original of his books, *L'Enquête*, where his pitiless precision draws from the very ugliness an atmosphere of beauty, where his veracity—that enjoined by the criminal code—draws up the most terrible indictment against poverty and ignorance, against charitable injustice and against the "there is no advance" of despair. His conviction that socialism contains "the highest form of mysticism—the mysticism of the idea of justice"—has here created a new form of social novel.

"War is fleeting, Work is eternal." This might be the motto of his war-trilogy: *Le Travail invincible*, *Les Métiers blessés*, *La Victoire mécanicienne*. Here he names in labour's roll of honour the workers who are not interrupted in their task by the sound of the

cannon. Here he struggles against the prejudices, bourgeois or socialist, which threaten the health of the race, which hinder the return to work, "the victory of France over the French." Here he keeps his word "to place exactness before love." *Les Métiers blessés* shows that "the ruin of the French factories is an example of Germany's crime against human work." In *Les Chercheurs d'or* he has chosen Austria's misery as an "example of the incomprehension or scorn of the forces of toil by the men who made the Peace." Amusing through its international medley, this book, the documentation of which appears rather improvised, constitutes a less energetic plea than a certain sober article on *La Contagieuse Misère* in which Hamp courageously demands the "Franco-German alliance, first condition of the United States of Europe and of world peace." *Le Cantique des Cantiques* manifests a return to his former method. Its hero is Perfume, followed from the gardens of Grasse to the drawing-rooms furnished by the Rue de la Paix; but the divorce is too striking between the newspaper lyricism which renders the romantic part of these two volumes unbearable and the powerful description, alone worthy of Hamp, of a trade in which "we invented the lie before knowing the truth."

We must borrow his brutal frankness to speak of his style, excellent when turned towards action, detestable when aiming at literary effect. Influenced by the Goncourts and by Paul Adam, Hamp's prose seems less written to be read or heard than to be experienced materially. He wishes less to describe his object than to reconstruct it before our eyes, and sometimes he succeeds in so doing; but this method is accompanied by immutable mannerisms which he lends to his Viennese no less than to his fellow-citizens of Lille, by useless and ridiculous contortions: "An error armed the laughing demon in the Champénoises of Horuis, and he made short work of smashing the glassware so arduously blown." . . . "The first-class railroad passes and the advertising rates offered repose to his liberty of thinking, still useless because of M. Ipp's difficulty in recalling what was orthodox." These sentences from *Vin de Champagne* and from *Le Rail* were merely clumsy. *Le Cantiques* multiplies examples of this monotonous perversity: "Energetic breaths hurled balms . . . the wild bouquets hurled bittersweet perfume . . . shaking the branches by hand only, to destroy them less than by so much hitting with a stick . . . " etc. Pierre Hamp is too forward-looking to lose himself in this false depth of decadence. He well knows that the writer in his work is he who engraved these distinct formulas: "The probity of affirmation without regard to persons is a great revolutionary force. . . ." "France

is not a landscape, a geographic being. It is the site of a human quality . . ." "There was nothing at Thermopylæ but professional conscience."

4. THE EGO AND THE UNIVERSE

In his preface to Marcel Proust's *Les Plaisirs et les Jours*, Anatole France noted, as early as 1896, that this writer "enjoyed equally describing the splendid desolation of the setting sun and the uneasy vanities of a snobbish soul." There is much worldliness in these attempts of a beginner whose portrait of Violante takes its place marvellously between an illustration by Madeleine Lemaire and a composition by Raynaldo Hahn. Still, who to-day would hesitate to recognize the accent of Marcel Proust in the ingenious eulogy of bad music, in certain analyses in *La Fin de la jalousie* or in this *Fragment de comédie italienne?*—"Life is strangely easy and smooth for certain persons of great natural distinction, witty and affectionate, but capable of all the vices, even when they practise none of them publicly and cannot be charged with a single one. There is something supple and secret about them. Thus, their perversity gives piquancy to the most innocent occupations, such as walking at night in the gardens."

Since the *Jean-Christophe* series, no one had undertaken to construct a monument comparable in its proportions to *A la Recherche du temps perdu;* but, while Jean-Christophe's life was told in the third person, the narrative here is entirely subjective, mingling autobiography and the memories of an observer without however there being any question of an automatic development. Proust, indeed, attempted the resurrection of a life by means of memory: "Perhaps," he writes at the very beginning of *Du Côté de chez Swann*, "the immobility of the things about us is imposed upon them . . . by the immobility of our thought in their presence." Placed in a state which breaks this immobility of thought, the memory will witness the renaissance of a past at once living and constructed: "Thus the spaces of my memory became covered little by little with names which, by arranging themselves, by composing themselves with regard to each other, by forming more and more numerous relations among themselves, imitated those finished works of art in which there is not a single isolated touch, in which each part in its turn receives from the others its *raison d'être* as it imposes its own upon them." This sentence from *Le Côté de Guermantes* defines his method. Hence the importance he attaches to Names, the syllables of Balbec or Guermantes absorbing for him the place or the woman they designate, the real individuals hav-

ing but a secondary importance for him who pursues "an æsthetic pleasure," not "an historical curiosity," in a quest where everything relates "to the narrator who says I and who is not always I," if the author is to be believed. Hence furthermore the interest he shows in the language of the characters which is at the same time an indication and an obstacle to discovering the truth. A change of vocabulary will show the awakening of sensuality in Albertine and will not suffice to dissimulate in Saint-Loup, "that aristocrat whom Robert aspired precisely not to be." Hence finally his tolerance for worldly gossip, afternoons at Mme. de Villeparisis' or a "social Last Supper" at the Guermantes'. There he hunts down the truth under the lying words, analyses the preconcerted and the mannered into their elements, rejecting nothing, avoiding nothing but the arbitrariness of the choice. The Past, that is his domain, the present in his narrative being merely an instant of the past upon which he focuses the light of other moments of a past more or less distant. To appreciate his extraordinary skill, one must read the comparison between the two performances of La Berma, or this passage: "Before going to sleep, I thought so long I could not that, even when asleep, I had a little thought left. It was a mere gleam in the almost obscurity, but it sufficed to reflect in my sleep, first the idea that I could not sleep, then, reflection of this reflection, the idea that it was in sleeping I had had the idea I was not asleep, then, by a new refraction, my awakening . . . to a new nap in which I wanted to tell some friends who had entered my room, that just now, while sleeping, I had thought I was not sleeping. These shadows were scarcely distinct. It would have required a great and very vain delicacy of perception to seize them. Thus later, at Venice, long after sunset, when it seemed to be quite dark, I saw, thanks to the echo, invisible however, of a last note of light indefinitely held on the canals as if by the effect of some optic pedal, the reflections of the palaces unfurled as if forevermore in blacker velvet on the twilight grey of the waters."

Such an example shows the difficulty of speaking precisely of this art without basing each observation upon multiple quotations. At least it permits us also to see by what successive gradations Proust depicts his object, how he corrects the harshness of the words by mobilizing about the affirmation pictorial and melodious combinations which take away its dryness. "I think," he wrote (apropos of Flaubert in whom he admired "the eternal imperfect"), "that the metaphor alone can give a sort of eternity to style." He seeks incessantly the image, nourishing with it his most difficult scenes such as the meeting of Charlus and Jupien in *Sodome et Gomorrhe.* He owes it his hap-

piest successes, whether he makes us feel "Rachel balanced by two infinities" or "that privilege of being abruptly present at our own absence" or the pianist "who is only a window looking out on a masterpiece" or this definition in *A l'Ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs:* "Beauty is a series of hypotheses narrowed by ugliness which bars the road we saw already opening on the unknown."

There has been much discussion concerning the composition of these thousands of pages. Proust defined it as "rigorous though veiled" and denied obeying "the fortuitous laws of the association of ideas." Should we conclude from this that the episode of Mlle. Vinteuil in *Swann* begins *Sodome et Gomorrhe* or that the fight with Gilberte announces Albertine's kiss? His order is sometimes purely verbal and does not seem to him so evident that he can dispense with reminders and warnings. For he is by turns verbose in a parenthesis and concise in a long sentence where several different ideas rise one above the other, mutually enlightened. He sums up all Cambray in a little morsel of *madeleine* and lingers over the etymology of "smoking" or of *porte-revolver.* His *Côté de Guermantes* is sometimes only the *côté* of Françoise, dowager of the flunkeys, who thinks like Pascal, talks like Mme. de Sévigné and analyses like Marcel Proust. All snobbishness moves him, whether it be that of "the little old green-trellised summer-house" of the Champs Elysées or that of the interminable *soirée* which will bring him "the sparkling, celestial shower of the smile" of a duchess. Without denying the virtuosity which analyses Albertine's kiss with a magnifying-glass or leaves us the agonizing impression of having entered into personal relations with the Verdurins, one may prefer to it the serried psychological warp of the page where he describes a voice heard over the telephone, the chapter—moving, without sentimentality—in which he recalls the death of that grandmother whose image, thanks to him, will live.

—In a gallery of portraits which solidly sustains this enormous work. Like Stendhal, he has already deserved to have "his whole world" talked of. He has the same skill in describing Saint-Loup "not sufficiently intelligent to understand that intellectual worth has nothing to do with acceptance of a certain æsthetic formula" as in evoking the man-woman with "the false robe which hinders his steps." A society lives again in his books: the aristocratic Guermantes, the diplomatist Norpoix, Cottard the physician, Bergotte the writer, Elstir the artist, Bloch the snob. An epoch has hailed its Saint-Simon in him whose best *Pastiches* so marvellously imitated the *Mémoires;* and yet when after the first surrender one stops to think, one quickly remarks that the most minutely drawn char-

acters—Gilberte, Mme. de Guermantes and Swann, the precursor of the narrator—are also those which remain in the last analysis the least independent of their creator. Their life seems diminished by all he has borrowed from them to revive his own past. This will appear more clearly if we compare Proust's works with the novels of Henry James. Proust knows nothing of the disinterestedness which impels James to efface himself, to forget himself the better to animate his heroes, leaving his dialectics at their disposal. Proust, too, transposes but in an absolutely different manner. At most he accords Swann, who is in certain respects the narrator in action, a gleam of "that intermittent *mufflerie* which reappeared in him as soon as he was no longer unhappy, and which lowered, at the same time, the level of his morality"— a *mufflerie* which is perhaps but the healthy reaction of a liberated intelligence.

On this immense tapestry certain perfect bits stand forth. A volume of essays will certainly be extracted from *A la Recherche du temps perdu:* names, images, sickness, death, sleep, music, and snobbishness, sexual inversion (for Proust here had the courage to face a success easy to foresee and, in treating his subject, to disappoint comic hopes). The fact that chapters entitled "*Les Progrès irréguliers de l'oubli*" or "*Les Intermittences du cœur*" may be isolated from his narrative exactly indicates the strength and the weakness of a work which André Gide has compared to Montaigne's *Essais*—adding however a surprising eulogy: "What I most admire is, I think, his gratuitousness. I know no work more useless or one which seeks to prove less." To which we would willingly reply that *Les Caves du Vatican* is not more partial than this *Recherche du temps perdu,* an apology—against creative imagination—of the passive memory. It is true Proust has mentioned "that detached, smiling, almost sympathetic benevolence by which we reward the object of our disinterested observation for the pleasure it procures us"; but he has warned us equally that he "places in the last volume his whole theory of art concerning unconscious recollections" which are for him realities after the fashion of Vinteuil's little saying that the musician has not invented but simply liberated. Now does this not come back again to the dangerous generalization of *Les Plaisirs et Jours:* "Later I was often ill, and for long days I too had to remain in the Ark. I then understood that never had Noah seen the world so well as from the Ark, in spite of its being closed and of its being dark on earth"?—a sentence which explains that curious comment on the sonata in the *Jeunes Filles,* where Proust denies intelligence, individual or collective, the power to grasp immediately a new beauty. So that,

of this art entirely based upon the slow absorption by the ego of the elements time has deposed in it—of this art which leaves the various parts of *La Recherche du temps perdu* the aspect of vast mines unequally developed—the last word is perhaps less the love of analysis than the hatred of synthesis.

Jacques Chardonne's *L'Epithalame* marks an effort to escape from this stifling atmosphere of the ego which questions itself. The centre of the interest in that long novel is no longer a man or a woman but the couple. Berthe and Albert are shown us from their earliest acquaintance, each following his life in the midst of which the other appears intermittently. Little by little the meetings multiply to the point of intimacy, of marriage. Then begins the double discovery—surprises, clashes, incomplete awakenings, disunion. About this central couple other households evolve, solving the enigma of love in their manner. It is true all the pictures in this series, impartial by dint of detail, are not equally perfect; but the ensemble, through its quiet breadth, through the sober return to "the bed of the river" which forms its dénouement, is not unworthy of comparison with the equitable *Middlemarch* which Chardonne seems to have remembered at least as much as *Anna Karénina.*

Valéry Larbaud's books keep the clinging fascination of a perfume. To analyse him would be useless had all rendered justice to the writer who has so subtly resolved the conflict of the ego and the universe as it presents itself to the novelist. Larbaud's work is situated at what Proust would call "a seam." He is capable of being at once in the ark and out of the ark. The author of *Enfantines* has really tasted the joys of "the great epoch," he has poetized even its vacation tasks. In Elaine and Milou he has indicated its perverse imaginings like a delicate painter whose hand trembles neither with admiration nor with indignation. The author of *Fermina Marquez* has really lived school life with its troubles, its immediate ambitions, its immense dreams. He has carried coquetry to the extent of showing that a good student's imagination is as rich as a dunce's; but his education was double, for he had the luck to receive it "in an old college more cosmopolitan than an *exposition universelle*" where "the Castilian world was our second fatherland." This lesson of exoticism was not in vain. The translator of Butler, the poet-story-teller of *A. O. Barnabooth,* became like his hero, "from the standpoint of culture, a great European."

He has scoured Europe and each picture of the kaleidoscope has stamped itself upon his retina, from the Chelsea section where "heavily,

regularly like a pulse-beat, the three wild, passionate notes of an invisible bird fell in the silence of darkness and gold," to the landscapes pierced by the express. In a spirit of fairness, he has led his South Americans to Montmartre and diffused over Barnabooth's nervousness, over his "shadowy spirit," "the gentle, indulgent, intelligent Tuscan light." His enthusiastic, ironical Italy is more Stendhalian than Barrèsian for he finds his balance from the very start. His epigrammatical rockets do not prevent him from recognizing that "life does not lack a certain spirit, somewhat coarse but full of good sense." He discerns the precise moment when the sea ceases to declaim his own youth to begin another's story, and he leaves in time. "With the years," says Barnabooth, "my personality will doubtless establish itself. Then I shall write 'I' without hesitating, believing I know what it is." Larbaud has so far avoided his hero's menace. He remains intellectually "a perpetual runaway from every environment."

"Had I also my part to play, I could not be attentive. And I want to lose nothing." Thus speaks Barnabooth; but how well this sentence defines Larbaud's attitude! *A. C. Barnabooth, ses œuvres complètes, c'est-à-dire un conte, ses poésies, et son journal intime* is a book which, to borrow still another of his formulas, "one must not only have read, but know," a compendium of the aspirations of our epoch. If some stiffness is remarked in it, this is because men, in Larbaud's universe, are good for little but to express ideas, women alone provoking them without moreover expressing them. Barnabooth, a multimillionaire escaping from his caste, made up of cruelties and of pities, sinks to kleptomania without finding attraction in vice, attempts to be charitable without succeeding in not hating the poor, tries love without acquiring a taste for women, defiles himself without transcending the literature of the *Borborygmes:*

> *Je veux baiser le mépris à pleines lèvres;*
> *Je veux être le plus ignoble des hommes . . .*

Finally, disgusted by "all this *cuisine* of life," incapable of taking interest in himself, he returns to his America "to confront the unknown," and Europe remains abandoned to the voluptuous Putouarey who lives like Montaigne or Stendhal and sometimes feels himself a simple hog, to Stéphane, "the butcher of Karzan," who is always working mystically "to realize, oh! however little it may be," a constructor who asserts: "All nobility comes from the gift of oneself . . . I love the man who raises himself, however little . . . Economy and love are perhaps two names for the same thing."

Too indiscreet to knock at half-open doors, Larbaud has, since Barnabooth, drawn no great, virile figure, Marc and Réginald in *Beauté, mon beau souci* . . . being merely awkward screens between the artist and his model; but, warned "not to try to extend the long adventure," having learned from Larbaud that "liaisons begin in champagne and end in camomile," with what a sentiment of deliverance we welcome the women with whom he peoples his novels! Blessings on these creatures who heal man of man, awakening in his intelligence a new sensual vision of the world! For with Larbaud women all play this part of helping to free the mind. The ardours of Fermina, noble and triumphant in mystic or amorous exaltation, "the Genevese gentleness" of Rachel Frutiger, the equivocal coldness of Gertie "smiling and showing her small teeth under her heavy lips," leave in the imagination the same many-coloured wake as the ambiguous friends, Rose Lourdin and Rosa Kessler, as the sisters of the doomed women, Inga and Romana locked in each other's arms. And because of the beauty of her body, "silk and satin," their sovereign is Queenie Crossland, a young girl who "was before the intellectual life like a child before a piano it cannot play and who marvels when, touching the notes at random, it succeeds in producing a harmony"—a woman who transforms herself so unconsciously into an object of art, "exactly like the woman painted on a vase described by Thyrsis in the first idyll of Theocritus"; but, in spite of the charm of Inga, "the good comrade who never said no, the mate and sometimes the companion," the witty queen of them all is the invisible one, "she of whom I think, with her linen which, crumpled up, I could hold in my closed fist."

"Did they really love each other? Perhaps at bottom they loved but the kisses they exchanged." There are two sorts of lovers in Larbaud: those moved merely by the ambition "to have" a certain woman, by "the difficulty of the undertaking"; the others, the "happy lovers," those between whom everything happens "as if, in spite of ourselves, outside of ourselves, her life and mine loved each other," those who can separate while love is still a lovely ripe fruit at their lips and who go away without bitterness: "Points of suspension; a blank; and a new chapter opens a fresh page"—happy to the very end, since they have risked, in the inspiring adventure, neither their pride nor their heart, two motives of vain suffering. They will never have lost their lucidity in this invitation to mingle the vestments of the woman's body and those of the man's mind. How naturally Romana incites her painter to remember one of Lucian's dialogues! Slyly, the supple intelligence takes back what it had not given, only lent. For real sensuality, the one sensuality which lasts, is the artist's; but

its bonds must be broken: "At each new word I learned, I felt I had filed my prison bars a little further." In a voluptuous abandonment, Larbaud has caressed the sweet foreign syllables: *"la chica . . . o camerado close! . . .* Queenie . . . *la cara, la diletta, l'unica . . ."* Phantasies of sensualized intelligence, always sure to return to its mooring: some immortal verse of Malherbe's, of Maynard's, "those French words which are, in the series of speech, what the gold tips are in the series of cigarettes." Having heard the confession of *La Rue Soufflot:*

Au fond, malgré la mer
Et tant de courses, nous ne sommes jamais sorti
D'ici, et toute notre vie aura été
Un petit voyage en rond et en zigzag dans Paris,

let one reread the opening paragraph of *Amants, heureux amants,* that paragraph of a dozen long pages where the light of the mind plays on the inner monologue like the ray on Inga's throat, and one will recognize the originality of an art which, without impoverishing the multiple modern universe, reflects all its play of colour in the mirror of a French intelligence.

The inner monologue—different from the conventionalized confession of *Adolphe* or of *Dominique*—thus enters our psychological literature. Lively and spasmodic in Morand, it aims, in Proust, at the majesty of a "discourse on the passions." Larbaud attributes the progress between the fluid developments of Barnabooth and the swarming concentration of the *Amants,* to the influence of James Joyce. The epic spirit of *Ulysses,* the ampleness of its architecture, its surprising short cuts, even its literary and casuistical pedantry explain Larbaud's admiration but do not diminish the merit of his prose where all is ease, clarity and grace. However the old masters of the intimate monologue, Browning and Dostoïevsky, have more frequently given it the dramatic form, the author disappearing behind Guido or Ordynov. Will Jean Paulhan bring us back to these illustrious models? A thorough study of the language has led him to the indictment of *Jacob Cow le pirate.* Words are not our slaves but tyrants binding and betraying us in the manner of the rhyme which "establishes momentarily a claim of neighbouring sounds on neighbouring thoughts." If one already takes, "being alone, so many precautions and images to talk to oneself," to what danger do not words expose us in our relations with other people? Three stories by Paulhan examine three of these conflicts of which words are the arbiters. They denounce the crime of *Aytré qui perd l'habitude,* they provoke the

tardy exchange which permits *La Guérison sévère*, they aid the narrator of *Le Pont traversé* to heal a tragic misunderstanding; and one sees very clearly the route by which this enterprise of perpetual interrogation can aspire to regain the high human impartiality of *Bishop Blougram's Apology* or of *Mr. Sludge the Medium*.

But before creating a new order, perhaps it is necessary to dominate the actual disorder. "The world's out of joint" and, of this disequilibrium Germany offers the most striking and the most incomprehensible spectacle for a cultivated Frenchman. Thus, in *Siegfried et le Limousin*, under cover of the plot of a humanist ingenious in creating himself a second brain, Giraudoux has painted "that great human, poetic country which the majority of Germans get along perfectly well without to-day but of which I have not yet found the equivalent." In it he can in fact exercise his art on a reality which he has not even had, this time, to dissociate, disguising Berlin as the capital of Haroun al Raschid, describing in 1922 the trumped-up centenary of Goethe, forging letters of Heine at Munich, fearlessly facing kisses now that he knows women to be less "rare and perishable" than men, reassured as to the most complicated enigmas by the knowledge that a "knot always ends by coming undone through simple disgust at being a knot." And shortly after this exquisite *Siegfried*, appeared *Malice* in which Mac Orlan, in the setting of Mayence and Wiesbaden, offered us the realistic picture of the Pension Kreutzer. Here the flesh, all obstacles overcome, precipitates a drama, grotesque and violent, the protagonists of which are an average Frenchman, a Bavarian woman who "possessed the essential virtues permitting each to create himself a little hell to his measure," a lemon yellow woolen doll and . . . the devil. For the supernatural always answers the appeal of the human passions. And no decadence is irremediable so long as the lucid look of the artist watches over the universe.

5. ANDRÉ GIDE

"It has been said I run after my youth. It is true. And not after mine alone." The *Feuillet* in which André Gide makes this comment appeared the same season he had published two volumes of selected extracts and his article on the resumption of intellectual relations with Germany, at the moment when he was beginning his six public lectures on Dostoïevsky; and the same adversaries who had, until then reproached him with never leaving the *cénacle* of a little chapel have henceforth accused him of going down into the streets of Athens there again to corrupt youth. The moment is then propitious for examining why the author of *Les Nourritures terrestres*, of *Le*

Retour de l'Enfant prodigue and of *La Porte étroite,* the writer who has already made himself the foremost prose-writer of his generation also deserves to be called a master.

His maiden volume, *Les Cahiers d'André Walter* (1891), palpitated with the anxieties of a meditative adolescence. That breviary of scruples, comparable to Barrès' "manuals," was followed by the *Poésies d'André Walter* which prolonged it with the smiles of a Christian Laforgue:

Nous rapetassons de faux syllogismes
Et nous ergotons sur la Trinité,
Mais tout ça, ça manque un peu de lyrisme . . .

and preluded, in the minor key, the first two satirical farces:

Des pleurs encore! ah! ça devient trop monotone!

Among the *Cinq Traites,* the *Narcisse* and the *Tentative Amoureuse* announced *Les Nourritures* of which *Philoctète ou le traité des trois morales* was to draw the conclusions, while *El Hadj* was to inaugurate those nostalgic reveries of orientalized Orient and Africa which would be found again in *Amyntas* and *L'Immoraliste. Le Voyage d'Urien* contains Gide's tribute to Symbolism. His *Envoi* moreover:

Madame! je vous ai trompée:
Nous n'avons pas fait ce voyage,

led to *Paludes* which is the Dupuis and Cotonnet of Symbolism, the double satire of the normal man and of a certain malady. *Les Nourritures terrestres* (1897), responding to the anguish of the *Cahier Noir,* forms for Gide's work a preface into which he has put himself entirely, in which he has developed "strange possibilities in each man," seeking the paths of "a pathetic existence" in the negation of every rule, the exaltation of "the sensual ecstasy," the annihilation of everything which is not, Amyntas will say, "sensation and fervour." *Le Prométhée mal enchainé,* "a sheaf of tares," teaches us to nourish the eagle which fastens itself to each. In his desire to set out, like Sindbad's ship, to the open sea, Gide turned to the theatre in which he carried on two curious conflicts: the heroic madness of *Candaule* who pays with his life for his triumph over jealousy and egotism; the love of *Saül* for David—a troubling love aroused not only by the charm of a mind in the making but also by the passion for a perfect boy's body. The same obsession reappeared in *L'Immoraliste,* a "fruit full of bitter cinders" the living life of which the protagonist discovers somewhat late, to cling to it so fiercely that he conceives a pitiless hatred for

sickness as if it were a vice and no longer cherishes anything but the inhuman. In the meantime Gide began to collect in book form the criticisms, witty and profound without being dogmatic, contained in *Prétextes* and *Nouveaux Prétextes*. In 1907 appeared *Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue*, the Christian counterpart of the pagan *Nourritures*, a presentiment of which was already felt in its "And what I looked for along the roads, was not at first so much an inn as my hunger," interpreting the contradictory aspirations which drive man to leave the divine dwelling or to return to it. In 1909 Gide published *La Porte étroite*, the story of a soul in love with "celestial glory" which attained mystic joy through the supreme renunciation. Since then he has published *Isabelle* and *La Symphonie pastorale*, both transition works, the first rather unexpected in its semi-detective hunt for an elusive truth, the second clear and not less mysterious in its tragic conflict of Catholicism, Protestantism and life; but *La Symphonie pastorale* (1919) discharges a debt to the past. From the point of view of his evolution, Gide's last novel is actually *Les Caves du Vatican* in which, on the eve of the war, he studied social atheism and the provisional disorder which awaits a new discipline, doubtless "that excess of renunciation, that denial of virtue through very love of virtue" which is read in the published fragments of *Les Faux monnayeurs;* and the thirty years of literary activity thus summed up certainly give us the right to treat him as the bearer of a "new and terrible truth," as a master always partial because always urgent, whether he exhorts to the dangerous life or kneels with the prodigal son "at once like him smiling and his face wet with tears."

Throughout the caprices of the imagination and the vagrancies of desire, André Gide has never ceased to pursue God. "Wherever you may go," proclaims *Les Nourritures*, "you can meet but God." To which *Les Nouvelles Nourritures* will reply: "It is my heart's gratitude which makes me invent God daily." All his books state the same problem. For, in spite of their diversity, there are strong and subtle ties among them. "Narcissus dreams of Paradise . . . Wish not, Nathanaël, to find God elsewhere than everywhere . . . David," pleads Saül, "is it Thy will we should unite against God?" As a critic, Gide will praise Péguy for his lesson of heroism resuming the struggle with the Lord for Him to bless us. In this quest for God, there is, at the point of departure, hatred of the flesh, aversion for women, to which André Walter's *Cahier Noir* is a quivering testimony. *La Tentative amoureuse* repeats it: "Luc desired love, but feared carnal possession as a deadly thing." *Le Roi Candaule* culminates in a brutal "Sew up your veil!" very close to David's cry: "I hate her!"

If, leaving the Protestant *milieu* he pictured in *Si le grain ne meurt* . . . , Gide has carried his Protestantism to the point of Nietzscheism, he has never forgotten its moral preoccupations. André Walter enjoyed humiliating himself in his dearest affectations: "Through hatred of the words I have loved too well, I would like to write badly on purpose. I will break the harmonies, even should they be fortuitous"; but he experienced the pride of "that struggle in the dark" . . . "What honour, O God, that Thou hast judged me worthy!" Gide has stressed "the pride of the priest who would reveal the mysteries." There remains nevertheless something of the pastor in him, with his "mania for proselytizing." In vain he has hoped "through the wear of my senses . . . to lure my soul from its God." In vain he cries: "Nathanaël! I no longer believe in sin!" *L'Immoraliste* is the book of a moralist. He is haunted by the Bible. Moreover, every time he refers to it, he goes deeper into its beauty, as, for example, when he bases upon this verse: "He who would save his life shall lose it; but he who would give it will render it living in truth." The classicism of the *Prétextes*, "reflections on some points of literature and of morality." *Bethsabé*, the rounds of *Les Nourritures*, *Saül*, all derive their beauty from this biblical lyricism. He follows the gospel to its most mysterious passages and it is clear how his preface to *Armance* on "the dissociation of love and of pleasure" is connected with the prophetic words: "We shall be as the angels." When Philoctète declares: "I would reach the greatest transparency, the suppression of my opaqueness," he comes back to the Bible and the idea of a physical transformation of humanity deduced from it by Kiriloff in *The Possessed*. In *La Symphonie pastorale* Gide launches a heroine ignorant of sin into the heart of modern life, under cover of the dangerous parable of the lost sheep. However he rejects Catholicism. The pastor in the *Symphonie* says it for him: "Between Christ and Saint Paul I choose Christ."

Not through love of latitudinarianism: *La Porte étroite* proved that; but he wishes, like Dostoïevsky, to touch the bottom of Christianity, its latent anarchy. His *Souvenirs de la cour d'assises* proclaims it: "When one is among the public, one can still believe in justice. Seated in the jury box, one repeats Christ's saying: 'Judge not.'" Philoctète denies his virtue and he is happy in this destitution. David in *Bethsabé* has made the experiment:

J'ai voulu prier Dieu et puis j'ai commencé à songer . . .

Gide has brought the prodigal son back to his father's house, but he has ordered the departure of the younger brother. Others have cele-

brated the tradition of obedience. He himself has strongly renewed that of fervent anxiety—to such an extent that if he happened, through weariness, to return at last to the House, he has foreseen that others would leave it for the desert to discover there the desire which animated him.

"I do not find precisely interdictions and prohibitions in the letter of the Gospels; but the point is to contemplate God with the clearest possible gaze and it is my experience that each object I covet here on this earth becomes opaque, through the very fact of my coveting it, and that, the moment I covet it, the whole world loses its transparency, or else my look loses its clearness, so that God ceases to be sensible to my soul, and that abandoning the Creator for the creature, my soul ceases to live in Eternity, and loses possession of the kingdom of God." This fragment from *Les Nouvelles Nourritures* which, in its admirable prose, evokes depths which Dostoïevsky alone had explored with an equal lucidity, offers one of the keys to Gide's thought. The pastor in the *Symphonie* (a work in which the whole drama is based upon the impossibility of a happiness born of ignorance) experiences a similar clouding of vision: "Sin seems intolerable to me and I do not wish to abandon Christ." Rivière has remarked that for Gide "one idea is, above all, several others" and he himself has confessed it: "I always found the necessity of choosing intolerable. Choosing appeared to me not so much electing as rejecting what I did not elect." He will repeat it: "I have never been able to give up anything; and, protecting in myself at once the best and the worst, I have lived torn between them." Even *Les Caves* will refuse to come to a conclusion. The desire of *Isabelle's* narrator is "unavowably whetted" by this dilemma which it does not decide: should one or should one not, force events? "Whatever is delicious to me is hostile to me." That is the prediction which maddens Saül. Already André Walter stated it: "I have never had a happiness which my reason did not disapprove" and he dreaded rhetoric. Thus Nathanaël will learn "not sympathy, but love," passionate fervour:

> *Ce que j'ai connu de plus beau sur la terre,*
> *Ah! Nathanaël, c'est ma faim!*
>
> (*Nourritures.*)

Beauty resides in risk. Alissa risks this impure world on the assurance of eternal life. Candaule risks his sensual happiness on the hope of a greater happiness and does "an insensate thing," perhaps sublime, in offering Gyges the body of his Nyssia. Gide in *Si le grain ne meurt . . .*, repeating Karamazoff's motto, reminds us that a grain

of barley must die in order to bear much fruit, that the human being must know sensuality and sin before climbing certain heights. Whence these sudden changes, comic in Julius and Anthime, dramatic when Ulysses pays homage to the virtue of Philoctète, just as the latter has denied it. Which leads to the idea the most opposed to faith in God (Kiriloff's suicide is an instance), to the idea of the gratuitous act. "I call man the animal capable of a gratuitous act." Thus speaks the waiter in *Promethée.* Lafcadio, a creation of Gide's intelligence and sensuality, goes as far as "motiveless crime"; and, under their author's impulsion, Julius and he indulge, on this idea of gratuitousness, in a reckless game of "leapfrog." One would not dare aver that this intoxication was entirely exempt from divine nostalgia. Gide has however delighted at times in the spectacle of his own virtuosity. Anxious above all to remain "unengaged," reserving himself through his inventive deploying many detours and many retreats, he has charged Francis Jammes' verse with a most epigrammatic meaning:

Gide qui toujours flotte et revient d'Italie . . .

He has occasionally blended the solemn and the infantile in his portrait of Ménalque—Ménalque, or the necessity of theoretical weak-mindedness—which often serves to crumble the writer's responsibilities. He has made it a matter of coquetry to render himself "irreplaceable," to join mystification and sincerity in "this book in which there is no one," to play with his contradictions: "Nothing amuses me more than a system of ethics . . . Certainly it has often pleased me that a doctrine should justify my acts to myself; but sometimes I have been able to consider it merely as the refuge of my sensuality." He has foreseen that this mixture of taste for risk and of crafty prudence would seem "an abominable sophism to the pious soul who reads me"; but to treat him as a demoniac is not to do justice to the profound human truth of his evolution: "I came to understand that perfect sincerity . . . the sincerity not simply of the act itself, but of the motive, is obtained only by the most constant but least harsh effort, by the clearest look—I mean by that the least open to the suspicion of complacency, and with the most irony."

Moreover, amid the rudest assaults of his disquietude, he has kept his assured refuge—"classicism." He says in *Amyntas:* "To understand what culture signifies, one must have tasted the desert"; and his *Marche turque* ends with the desire for a prompt return to France. In *Les Caves* he has extolled life: "In life, one must paint in fresco. Erasure is prohibited." This element of the irreparable charms him, but he knows the benefits of a discipline. "Mallarmé," he says in a

letter, "taught me to carry over entirely into the work of art the idea of constraint, so indispensable to my nature, and to make of it a sort of artistic obligation." On this essential point he has never varied: "Art is always the result of a constraint . . . Our literature has never been more French than when it was more restrained and more refined." This idea is strong enough to colour even his conception of voluptuousness. Michel, in *L'Immoraliste*, seeks "a science of the perfect utilization of self by an intelligent restraint." As early as *La Tentative amoureuse* he formulated another of its consequences: "I do not like to abandon any task whatsoever, once I have undertaken it." This discipline is crowned with an aspiration for the general: "A great man has but one concern—to become as human as possible—let us say rather, to become *commonplace*. And, remarkable fact, it is thus he becomes most personal." The classicist, like the Christian, saves his life by losing it. Twenty years later he will emphasize this initial assertion: "The triumph of individualism and the triumph of classicism are one. Now the triumph of individualism lies in the renunciation of individuality." He joins Nietzsche and Racine through Dostoïevsky. He had always "held literary anarchy in horror." This was clearly seen when the author of *Les Caves* protested against the war Dada had declared on the French language. He was the better qualified for this rôle as defender of our tongue that, even in the Symbolist *Urien*, the most "Schwobian" of his books, his prose had remained firmly classic, that his *Paludes* had been not a treason but a return to its true tradition. *Saül* and *Candaule* had presented the union of intimate lyricism and of almost schematic dryness which suited these two conflicts of obscure forces. Gide has always preferred to indicate the themes rather than develop them romantically. He also defends *L'Immoraliste* against the reproach of accusation or of apology: "I have sought to prove nothing but to paint well and to illumine well my painting." Not a single fault of taste will be detected in the construction of his novels, not a sentimental trait in the pastor "whose heart is more arid than the desert." He has noted that the classic writer was situated beyond his emotion, not short of it like the romantic writer, and his phrasing equals France's in purity with that added "tremor" which, according to Goethe, is the best of man.

Though a true representative of classicism, Gide is not however narrowly nationalistic—whence his conflict with Barrès and Maurras. His curiosity remains universal: "I am always awaiting something or other unknown, new forms of art and new thoughts." He possesses the sentiment of measure and reminds Matisse that "the artist commits

a rare imprudence in renouncing painting a picture." Nor does he yield to artistic caprices any more than he had yielded to friendly exhortations urging him—after *L'Enfant prodigue*—to return to his own home at last. Having proposed this definition to Angèle: "Genius is the sentiment of resource," he sends her this warning also: "Whatever classicism refuses to integrate, risks turning against it." This humanism has made him the most penetrating of critics and the reader of his significant *Dostoïevski* will quickly recognize that all the comparisons with Dostoïevsky whereby we have enlightened this study have been inspired by the insistence with which he stresses in them certain ideas which are particularly dear to him. His criticism appears fluctuating. Nevertheless, every time he has commentated a master —Nietzsche, Dostoïevsky, Baudelaire or Stendhal—he has lighted up real depths, the abysses of which no one speaks. When he seems somewhat paradoxical, when he borrows a little from Theseus who "forgets to change sail as he forgets Ariadne at Naxos," when he remarks that uprooting has obliged Racadot to be original, his sallies open horizons. He quickly became conscious of his authority. He has put it, through lectures or translations, at the service of the great foreign writers, from Shakespeare to Tagore, from Blake to Browning and Conrad. He has generously welcomed the débuts of Larbaud, Romains and Giraudoux. He found tenderly delicate words to mourn for Philippe: "Near him, after a little while, one felt ashamed of being too big." He has the right to say he has interpreted Nietzsche's watchword as "be hard for yourselves before being hard for others . . . Certain critics have reproached me with the eclecticism of my tastes and have dubbed me a dilettante because I demand of myself alone the qualities they demand only of others. . . . They do well, and I am grateful to them for preparing readers for me." The future will seriously repeat what he wrote here with a smile. Gide is an admirable artist, in all the forms he has tried. Who could remain indifferent to the humour of the three Soties, so rich in *Paludes*, so capricious in *Le Promethée*, alternately clownish and elusive in *Les Caves?* The fantasies (dream in *Paludes*, Simultaneistic attempt or affectation of negligent notes in *Les Nourritures*) are as classically constructed as a certain page on the slowing down of time in *Narcisse*. Sometimes he bares the methods of his art, in *Isabelle* told obliquely, in *La Symphonie*, a candid confession. Each portrait lives in them however thanks to the relief possessed by even the slightest puppets in *Les Caves* where all the dialogues develop in a refined *allegro*. With an infallible simplicity, he weaves the dramas of *La Porte étroite* or *La Symphonie pastorale*.

André Walter's *Cahier blanc* shows his art in idealizing reality in order to extract from it *La Porte étroite*, one of the loftiest psychological novels of our literature through the subtlety of its analyses, through the intense pathos of Alissa's diary; and, had one absolutely to choose, one would name as his masterpiece *Le Retour de l'Enfant prodigue* for the perfection of the construction, the plenitude of the thought and the nobility of the meditation. *Les Nourritures terrestres* is written in a fluid prose which unravels every complexity: "Be not deceived, Nathanaël, by the harsh title it has pleased me to give this book. I might have called it Ménalque, but Ménalque never, any more than yourself, existed. The one man's name this book could have borne is my own; but how then should I have dared sign it?"—which condenses into a few words the quivering lyricism: "I have made myself a prowler to be able to graze whatever prowls. I am seized with tenderness for whatever knows not where to warm itself, and I have passionately loved whatever roves." There exists at present a Gide sentence, proceeding sometimes by unfolding: "At once I persuaded myself that there are many things which appear impossible only so long as they have not been tried"; sometimes by juxtaposition: "What I like least in a friend, ordinarily, is indulgence. Albert was not indulgent. One could, at need, when with him, find arms against oneself. And, without being too conscious of it, I sought them." Above all he excels in those brief sentences where emotion speaks gravely in a low tone: "I put myself into a state of hostility . . . I am going to speak at length of my body . . . Others could have made a book of it . . . Look out for the door-steps." Perhaps this perfection of the artist has sometimes appeased his ardent thirst for God. Perhaps this conquest of the absolute has accorded him the joy of possessing peace for an instant: "Shall I tell you what keeps me from believing in eternal life? It is this quasi-perfect satisfaction which I taste in the very effort and in the immediate realization of happiness and harmony."

Should his originality be questioned? Certain critics will reproach him with having rethought Nietzsche and Dostoïevsky; but just as Kiriloff started from a Christian commonplace, so he will be able to reply: "Everything has been said already; but as no one listens, we must always begin again." Recently an English article represented him as "just missing being a great writer"—a judgment admissible only from a foreigner insensible to the marvellous use Gide makes of our language, "a piano without a pedal." Rereading his *Explications* it is easy to see what has superficially justified this opinion: his reserve, his lagging behind himself, a great part of his work having

been the price he had to pay to fight free of the past. Haunted by the Goncourts' saying: "One does not write the books one wishes," convinced that many books are "but a deferred temptation," he has often disconcerted those who took his invocations literally: "Rise, winds of my thought, which will scatter these ashes!" Sometimes he has disappointed the disciples who, having listened to his "I have a mortal hatred for every theory which does not teach a sufficient employment of my strength and virtue," expected warlike ardours of him. There is however in his fear of choosing the sense of a profound complexity: "There are days when to repeat to myself that two and two still make four, is enough to fill me with a *certain* beatitude—and the mere sight of *my* fist on the table . . . and other days when this is completely one to me." Hesitation is here called intelligence. For no one has better felt the irremediable flight of the hours: "You will think, you will say: the fruits were there. Their weight bent, already wearied the branches; my mouth was there and it was full of desires; but my mouth remained shut, and my hands were unable to reach out because they were joined in prayer; my soul and my body remained desperately athirst." *La Symphonie pastorale*, his "final debt to the past," pronounced the failure of the Protestant and of the Catholic who have succeeded only in driving the woman they both loved to despair. The last page of *Les Caves* announces a departure: "Here begins a new book. O palpable truth of desire! Thou drivest the phantoms of my spirit into the penumbra." Nevertheless the last word remains terribly equivocal, for it might be applied to Gide as well as to Lafcadio: "Does he still consider yielding?" Spontaneously the reader returns to the shifting *Conversation avec un Allemand:* "Action interests me not so much by the sensation it gives me as by its consequences, its resonance. That is why, if it interests me passionately, I believe it interests me still more when committed by another. I am afraid, you understand, of compromising myself, I mean to say of limiting what I might do by what I do . . . I prefer making others act to acting myself."

Posterity, welcoming him among its guides, will not respect such shades—which perhaps still have their origin in religious scruples. Willingly or unwillingly, it will rivet him to some essential truths. Perhaps it will accept "this state of dialogue" in which he has delighted; but it will bring out its affirmations. "Nathanaël, at present, cast aside my book." No, it will not cast aside *Les Nourritures terrestres*, but it will take the author of *Nouvelles Nourritures* at his word: "I have written so that, later on, an adolescent, such as I was at the age of sixteen, but freer, bolder, more accomplished, may

find here a response to his palpitating interrogation." This response it will discover in these words of his: "Life may be lovelier than men admit . . . Ah! I have lived too prudently until to-day. One must be lawless to listen to the new law. O deliverance! O liberty!" And it will count among its masters the great writer who, in spite of so many obstacles in himself and outside himself, will have paved the way for it to this liberation.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

POETRY, the drama, the novel, the essay show literary life under its creative aspect. There exists another in which language limits itself to the clear expression of ideas, the manner of giving being less important here than the gift. Doubtless certain of the writers whom we are going to mention rapidly will appear in the future to have brought as many flowers as fruits. Sainte-Beuve's weekly articles are more durable than many a work calling itself disinterested. For this discrimination, however, the collaboration of time is indispensable. It would be unjust and rash to pretend, in the heat of the debate, to go beyond the limits of an impartial nomenclature.

1. CRITICISM

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Ferdinand Brunetière represented dogmatic criticism dominated by that idea of the evolution of the forms which beguiled at once the biologist and the moralist in him, directing his *Evolution de la poésie lyrique* and his *Histoire de la littérature française.* Less doctrinary, Emile Faguet, who devoted a volume to each of the four great centuries of our literature, is remarkable for his wide culture and his faculty of assimilation, at times superficial, always suggestive. In opposition to Francisque Sarcey whose sound common sense and love of well-made plays fill *Quarante Ans de théâtre*, the Jules Lemaître of *Les Contemporains* and of *Impressions de théâtre* maintained the rights of an Impressionist embarrassed at times by a certain timidity of taste in the presence of genius; but, as early as 1889, Charles Morice, in *La Littérature de tout à l'heure*, had proclaimed the aspirations of the young writers of his epoch whose technique Robert de Souza studied in *Le Rythme poétique* (1892).

Gustave Lanson has since inaugurated a more scientific method, with (*mutatis mutandis*) laboratory processes. His *Manuel bibliographique* is as important as his *Histoire de la littérature française.* To René Doumic has fallen the heritage of Brunetière in the *Revue des Deux*

Mondes and at the Academy. Paul Souday has introduced into *Le Temps* a sympathetic curiosity concerning the young authors which rejuvenates this conservative newspaper, and of which *Les Livres du Temps* will give an idea. Pierre Lasserre began, with *Le Romantisme français*, as a disciple of Maurras; he has since evolved and the *Renan* he announces will permit us to determine more precisely his new position.

Henry Bidou, who was novelist and military critic, prepares outlines and plans for the historian of to-morrow. Maurice Boissard's chronicles have the charm—garrulous at times to the point of irritation—which constitutes the originality of Paul Léautaud. Adolphe Van Bever has not confined himself to the study of the poets of to-day of whom he has presented an anthology now classic. His numerous editions and prefaces combine the most refined taste with minute erudition. André Fontainas reserves a sympathetic welcome to the poets. To Tancrède de Visan we owe fine studies on several of our great unpopular writers and on *L'Attitude du Lyrisme contemporain*. André Thérive maintains the tradition of Joseph Prudhomme in criticism (*Le Français langue morte*) as in the novel: (*Le Voyage de M. Renan, Le Plus Grand Péché.*) André Billy has found relaxation in the witty *Barabour* from the conscientiousness with which he analyses the works of his contemporaries to whom Fernand Vanderem offers, in *La Vie et les Lettres*, the mirror of a flexible intelligence. Jacques Boulenger remembers that " . . . *mais l'art est difficile*" and approaches current literature with the courtesy of a gentleman, while Léon Blum mingles his judgments with brilliant paradoxes. Studies on French literature (*Après le Naturalisme, L'Equivoque du Classicisme*) have led Gaston Sauvebois to present the problem of Europeanism. With Henri Massis, author of unintentionally comic *Jugements*, Jacques Maritain professes a scholastic and Thomist intellectualism. Louis-Martin-Chauffier, a disciple of Proust, comes back to criticism in his *Correspondances apocryphes* under the *pastiche* form which made *Les Nuits et Ennuis* of Ernest La Jeunesse successful. Aggressive in Léon Werth's sallies, criticism attains a European impartiality in Albert Thibaudet. It becomes, with Jacques Rivière, a luminous recreation, what Jaurès would have called "a progress in depth." His *Trente Ans de vie française* and the *Etudes* are indispensable to the student of the contemporary period.

Following the example of Gautier and Baudelaire, numerous writers have occupied themselves with art criticism—for example Péladan, Kahn, Faure, Salmon and Klingsor. Camille Mauclair has analysed

the charm of impressionism and of Schumann's "confidential music." The vast syntheses of the scholars—André's Michel's *Histoire de l'art* and Emile Male's *Art Religieux en France* do not exclude monographs in which amateurs define the reasons for their preferences: Marcel Sembat in *Henri Matisse*, Ambroise Vollard in *Cézanne* and *Renoir*. The work of G. Geoffrey, author of a monumental *Monet*, and of J. Ajalbert as art critics is as important as their work as novelists. To these names must be added those of Georges Besson, editor of *Les Cahiers d'aujourd'hui*, and of François Fosca who, after studies on contemporary painters, has given a charming novel of false history, *Monsieur Quatorze*, where Vautrin dupes Henri Beyle. The explanations of the painters André Lhôte and Albert Gleizes renew the tradition of Fromentin with their introductions to Cubism. J.-E. Blanche has constituted himself the witty critic and the painter-novelist of contemporary life. Maurice Denis has, in *Théories* and *Nouvelles Théories*, contributed to the renaissance of sacred art while at the same time preaching the necessity of a new classic "order" which will not exclude "voluptuousness"; and the barriers are felt to fall in the dialogues where Valéry looks for the secrets of architecture and of music.

It has been seen how musical preoccupations inspired Mallarmé and Rolland with certain of their most significant works. Willy's *Lettres de l'ouvreuse* will better inform the readers of 1950 as to our enthusiasms than his novels as to our immorality. Certain compositors have been excellent critics, witness the bantering spirit of Camille Saint-Saens, the pious fervour of Vincent d'Indy's *César Franck*, the delicious *Monsieur Croche antidilettante* by Claude Debussy whose Introduction very subtly evokes *Monsieur Teste*. Here too must be mentioned, after Albert Lavignac's and Paul Landormy's *Histoires de la Musique*, the special works by Jean Chantavoine on Beethoven and Liszt, by J.-G. Prudhomme on Beethoven, by Adolphe Boschot on Berlioz, by Camille Bellaigue on Mendelssohn and Gounod, by André Pirro on Bach. Pierre d'Alheim and M. D.-Calvocoressi have extolled Moussorgski's genius. Pierre Lalo has won a reputation as a caustic chronicler. Louis Laloy has, in his *Rameau* and in his *Debussy*, proved that a musicograph can be a noble and firm writer. Emile Vuillermoz's *chroniques* are as solid as they are brilliant, witness the volume *Musiques d'aujourd'hui*. In *Quinze Musiciens français* and his articles in the *Revue musicale* (edited by Henry Prunières, specialist in the seventeenth century), André Cœuroy maintains a strict unity in musical culture and literary culture.

Foreign literatures have found worthy introducers in France. Be-

ing unable to cite the innumerable theses devoted to European writers, we shall content ourselves with recalling the articles by Melchior de Vogüé, Arvède Barine, Alfred Mézières, T. de Wyzewa (who was also a Symbolist critic and the author of *Nos Maîtres*), the works of Robert de la Sizeranne and Jacques Bardoux on Ruskin, Abel Chevalley's book on *Le Roman anglais*, the works of Philéas Lebesgue so thoroughly documented, the studies of comparative influences by Joseph Texte and Louis Cazamian. Ernest Seillière's *Philosophie de l'Impérialisme* explains his desire to "de-Rousseau-ize" France by large European perspectives. Henri Lichtenberger has presented in their true light Wagner's ideas and those of Nietzsche of whom Charles Andler has undertaken to describe the genesis, the growth and the success. André Chevrillon has renewed the tradition of Taine, attentively noting the evolution of modern England incarnated alternately in Kipling and in Meredith, minute painter of Brittany and Morocco, as sensitive to the poetry of India as Emile Hovelacque to the mysteries of the Far East; and two cultures are also reconciled by an Abel Lefrance who interrupts his labors on French literature for an almost detective study of Shakespeare or by a Pierre de Nolhac who, as a humanist poet, evokes, one after the other, Petrarch, Ronsard and Versailles.

To criticism belong also, however unexpected the *rapprochement* of these names, *Etudes d'histoire religieuse* by Ernest Havet, and the *Quatrième Evangile* by Alfred Loisy who continue the exegesis of Renan; the moral exhortations of Pastor Wagner, and the *Principes de la guerre* in which Marshal Foch gives "intellectual discipline" as the foundation for military art.

2. REVUES, JOURNALISTS AND ORATORS

The principal *revues* to be consulted for the literary history of the last fifty years are: *La Revue des Deux Mondes, La Nouvelle Revue* (1879), *La Revue wagnérienne* (1885), *Le Mercure de France* (1890), *L'Ermitage* (1891), *La Revue blanche* (1891), *La Revue hebdomadaire* (1892), *La Revue de Paris* (1894), *Le Centaure* (1896), *Les Cahiers de la quinzaine* (1899), *Vers et Prose* (1905), *La Nouvelle Revue française* (1909), *Les Marges* (1909), *L'Effort libre* (1910), *Les Cahiers d'aujourd'hui* (1913), *Les Ecrits nouveaux* (1916), *La Revue universelle* (1920), *La Revue de France* (1921). Let us cite, among the Catholic reviews, *Le Correspondant, Les Etudes, La Revue des Jeunes, Les Lettres* founded in 1913 by Gaétan Bernoville. *L'Esprit nouveau, Action, Aventure,* and *Intentions* recently established, express the tendencies of an advanced guard which it is not permitted

to ignore, any more than it is the efforts of Jean Hytier in *Le Mouton Blanc* to group the partisans of a new classicism. *Le Monde nouveau, Europe* and *La Revue Européenne* are Franco-European tribunes. Bibliographical bulletins like *Vient de Paraître* and papers like *Les Nouvelles littéraires* contribute to the diffusion of literature in France and abroad.

It is difficult to speak of journalists in a history of literature, so much does the timeliness which makes their success demand of them in the way of sacrifices. Edouard Drumont's articles in *La Libre Parole* made the same stir during the Dreyfus epoch as Henri Rochefort's in *La Lanterne* towards the end of the Second Empire. To present themselves before the tribunal of the future, Georges Clemenceau had the prudence to write his *Grand Pan*, Sembat his ingenious *Faites la paix, sinon faites un roi*, R. de Jouvenel his ironical *Journalisme en vingt leçons*, *Gustave Téry* his living *Jaurè*, Jean de Pierrefeu his indiscreet *G. Q. G.*, *Secteur* and *Plutarque a menti.*

It is the same with the orators whose most applauded speeches stand ill the test of reading. As models of sacred eloquence, the Catholics cite P. Hyacinthe, R. P. Monsabre, P. Didon and P. Janvier; the Protestants Eugène Bersier and Wilfred Monod; the Jews Zadoc Kahn. Waldeck-Rousseau in civil cases, Henri Robert in criminal cases have maintained the prestige of the bar. Political eloquence has been represented by Léon Gambetta skilful in large theatrical effects, Albert de Mun whose dignity was respected by all, Jean Jaurès who, in spite of the extent of his culture, could electrify the masses. As for the immortality of the orators of to-day, we leave the subscribers to the *Journal Officiel* the pleasure of prophesying with regard to it.

3. HISTORY

Above the diverse schools of historians stand forth two names: that of Fustel de Coulanges, continuer of Tocqueville and Taine, faithful in *La Cité antique* and *Les Institutions de l'ancienne France* to that "*Quæro*" which implies the respect of the texts and the absence of prejudices; that of Albert Sorel who was not only an historian but a story-teller as well and a Stendhalian psychologist, a duality by which *L'Europe et la Révolution française* benefited. About these masters will be ranged Maspero and his *Histoire ancienne des peuples de l'Orient;* Ernest Lavisse, a specialist on German questions and the initiator of a monumental *Histoire de France;* Camille Julian, the learned historian of Gaul; A. Aulard who has renewed the study of the French Revolution envisaged from a totally different angle by

Louis Madelin. Vandal, historian of the Russian alliance; Chuquet who studied the youth of Napoleon I of whom Henri Houssaye has dramatically celebrated the downfall; Thureau-Dangin who devoted himself to the July Monarchy as Gabriel Hanotaux has devoted himself to the Third Republic and Pierre de la Gorce to the Second Empire; finally, Ernest Boutmy whose researches were divided between the Greek genius and Anglo-Saxon psychology; and the *chroniques* of Jacques Bainville and Auguste Gauvain stake out history step by step as it is made.

Religious studies are marked by the names of Mgr. Baudrillart, Georges Goyau and Abbé Sertillanges; but the master here is Abbé Henri Brémond, historian of Keble, Pusey and Newman, intelligent apologist of Fénelon, author of a *Histoire littéraire du Sentiment religieux* often compared with *Port-Royal;* and, beside this orthodoxy, Edouard Schuré, studying *Les grands initiés*, maintains the rights of heterodoxy.

So much erudition does not exclude art. Gaston Boissier's *Cicéron et ses amis* and *La Fin du paganisme* remain interesting even for the ordinary reader. Thanks to persistent seekers, we know better the visage of *la doulce France*." A. Luchaire has cleared up its institutions for us. Gaston Paris has shed light on the poems and legends of the Middle Ages; and his disciple, Joseph Bedier, in "renewing" *Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut*, worked creatively and realized the miracle of a "modern Béroul."

By the side of official history, the anecdote maintains its rights. If Funck-Brentano was indiscreet with regard to the past, Jules Claretie and Jean de Bonnefon have striven to be so concerning the present. If Frederic Masson has spared nothing to render Napoleon ridiculous, Robert Vallery-Radot has presented us a noble *Vie de Pasteur* and Emile Ollivier's pleas *pro domo* are engaging if not convincing. The journals of the Goncourts, of Léon Daudet and of Léon Bloy have already entered literature. Anatole France and André Gide have furnished autobiographic fragments and the future will find interesting documents at least in the *Mémoires* of Mme. Adam, the *Souvenirs* of Mme. Alphonse Daudet, the various *Ce Que* . . . of Arthur Meyer, the *Confessions* of Arsène Houssaye, the *Chronique de nos jours* of the historian Ernest Daudet, the *Lettres de jeunesse* of Ch.-L. Philippe, the letters of Vincent Van Gogh to Emile Bernard and those of Paul Gauguin to Daniel de Monfreid. Do we not count among their essential works the *Correspondance* of Flaubert and the *Correspondance* of Stendhal, as well as Baudelaire's *Lettres* and *Lettres à sa mère?*

4. PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is not distinct from literature. This has been seen by the example of Bergson and the stir made by Bergsonian ideas. However important Bergsonism may be, its success should not stifle the theories of other French thinkers. The philosophy of the "idea-forces" will make Fouillée's name live and Renouvier's is attached to a criticism of Kantism which ends with the affirmation of liberty. Ravaisson's historical works had led him to unite the French tradition and Greek thought in an ideal of beauty. Æsthetics have not been neglected, witness the researches of Bazaillas and G. Séailles. Guyau was the author of *Problèmes d'esthétique contemporains* before writing that *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction* which demands to be compared with Nietzsche and states the moral and religious problems which have since preoccupied Frédéric Rauh and Edouard Le Roy.

The principal effort of the contemporary philosopher has however been brought to bear upon the study of the relations between philosophy and science. J. Lachelier's thesis on *Le Fondement de l'Introduction* cleared the ground by carrying the Kantian idealism so far as to achieve liberation from it. Liard has maintained the legitimacy of the two domains, metaphysical and scientific, while the sociologists like Durkheim, the Positivists like Lévy-Brühl, the psycho-physiologists like Alfred Binet and Th. Ribot, abstain from speculations which are not based upon precise observations. Mathematics led Cournot to philosophy and the long ignored views of this precursor have brought about a renaissance of probabilism. Upon a history of mathematical philosophy Léon Brunschvicg has based a supple Spinozist intellectualism. Emile Boutroux, in demonstrating the contingency of the laws of nature, forestalled Henri Poincaré's conclusions.

For the savants too have refused to believe in the dogma of water-tight compartments. They have justified in every sense Claude Bernard's saying that "the scientific method proclaims the liberty of mind and thought." Louis Pasteur's addresses are so many summaries of his works. The chemist Berthelot insisted upon making it clear, in *Science et Philosophie*, "that no reality can be established by reasoning. The world cannot be divined." This definition of positive science should not however be interpreted as a negation of psychological life. While Paul Tannery made his experience of modern science serve the explanation of Hellenic science, Jules Tannery was at once the author of an *Introduction à la théorie des fonctions d'une variable*, of Parnassian verse and of noble *Pensées*. "It is by Science and Art alone that civilizations count." Such is Henri Poincaré's pro-

fession of faith at the end of *La Valeur de la Science*, a volume which would suffice to prove that the theoretical speculations of our epoch have not been useless for humanity: "Every action should have an aim. We should suffer, we should work, we should pay for our seat in the theatre, but it is to see; or at least that others may one day see." And the mathematician of genius whose influence is far from being exhausted concludes by demonstrating that "we can think thought only," that conscious thought between two shadowy infinities which—"strange contradiction for those who believe in time . . .—is but a flash in a long night."

It is this flash however which is everything." Through so many and so various works, creative or critical, contemporary French literature does not cease to widen the radiation of that spiritual light "which is everything."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

NOTES ON THE ABBAYE

It was on a rainy Sunday at the end of autumn 1906 that Vildrac, his wife and I discovered the house which was to become the *Abbaye*—a decrepit house, uninhabited for long years but still noble of aspect with its terraces, its red brick façade and its green shutters. It was surrounded by an immense overgrown park planted with trees of every sort. At the bottom of the park was a kitchen garden with numerous fruit trees. (Its fruits formed the basis of our nutrition for a whole summer.) There were lawns, a summer-house, paths choked with rank vegetation. Hundreds of birds haunted this domain so long abandoned. Fifteen days after our visit, the lease which made us masters of the Abbaye was signed. This melancholy document, still in my hands, bears five signatures: René Arcos, Georges Duhamel, Albert Gleizes, Henri Martin, Charles Vildrac. We add to these in our heart that of Linard, the printer who taught us our trade and shared to the end our good and our evil days.

One of our first concerns was to nail on the front door a placard where those who passed could read these verses of Rabelais':

> Cy, entrez vous, et soyez bien venus.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Céans aurez un refuge et bastille
> Contre l'hostile erreur qui tant postille
> Par son faulx style empoisonneur du monde:
> Entrez, qu'on fonde ici la loi profonde.

and below:

> Cy, n'entrez pas bigots,
> Vieux matagots,
> Marmiteux borsouflés . . .

Henri Martin, a young politician whose acquaintance we had recently made and who had been seduced by our projects, acquired a

printing outfit and placed it at our disposal. Vildrac, who was married and father of a family, arrived with his household. Each put into the salon, a room common to all, his most precious pieces of furniture.

Then we learned our printer's trade, rapidly enough to astonish Linard. The first two volumes which bore our imprint were *Des Légendes, des Batailles* (Georges Duhamel), *La Tragédie des Espaces* (René Arcos). Twenty volumes appeared from the Abbaye press. Robert de Montesquiou, as an evidence of his sympathy, entrusted us with the printing of a book of verse: *Passiflora.* He showed himself very exacting, made us begin the work over again several times and finally this good affair became one of the worst we had.

Many young artists were the guests of the Abbaye. Sunday often saw them arrive in a throng. Our house had become a place to go to. Singular persons also visited us. There were men in red shirts and black (already!), vegetarians, Fourrierists, all sorts of ists, very ugly and very talkative women who summoned us to live according to the doctrine. What doctrine? We never knew exactly. A visionary wanted to decide us to construct little wooden barracks in our park, doubtless to rear in them a generation of disciples. One morning, a cyclist with powerful calves and sky-colored eyes, Jules Romains, who was then at the Ecole Normale, brought us the manuscript of *La Vie unanime.* We read it aloud that very evening. What enthusiasm! To tell the truth, the form, the prosiness of the work made certain among us wince at times, but we all felt that a powerfully original and rarely precocious poet had been born.

Spring brought new tenants to the Abbaye. They were Mercereau and his wife (they arrived from Moscow where they had just married). Berthold Mahn, d'Otemar, Albert Doyen and his wife, some other friends. Musicians came to play their music, painters exhibited their canvases, poets were interpreted by actors and actresses. One of these, Blanche Albane, was eventually to become Duhamel's wife. The adventure lasted fourteen months. After a second and terrible winter, we were obliged to separate and abandon the Abbaye where we could no longer live. Our failure should above all be imputed to our youth. We lacked discipline and gave little heed to anything but our fancy. And then we pursued different ends—ends which we did not all of us succeed in stating precisely.

Two words more: the Abbaye was never a poetic school. It was, simply, an association of men aspiring to live freely and in common by their toil. If we then manifested sympathy for all the poets and writers who seemed to us to have talent, it was in no secret design to enroll them all under one banner. We had no common doctrine. It

often happened that we made fun of each other. And I shall go so far as to say, with Vildrac or Duhamel, that certain of our companions seemed to us to speak and to write a language foreign to our own. The critics have pointed out multiple affinities between Vildrac, Romains, Duhamel and myself. None of us will dream of denying them. They have even certainly extended to other poets: Jouve, Chennevière, Durtain, etc.; but there was never a school. We all had too great a horror of *caporalisme*.

René Arcos.

APPENDIX B

GENERAL WORKS TO BE CONSULTED

CRITICISM

Gustave Lanson, *Histoire de la Littérature française* (17th edition, 1922, Hachette).

Bédier and Hazard, *Histoire de la Littérature française illustrée* (1923, Larousse).

Ch. Le Goffic, *La Littérature française aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles* (1922, Larousse).

G. Casella and E. Gaubert, *La Nouvelle Littérature*, 1895-1905 (1906, Sansot).

G. Le Cardonnel and Ch. Vellay, *La Littérature contemporaine* (1905, Mercure).

Florian-Parmentier, *Histoire contemporaine des Lettres françaises* (1914, Figuière).

Ernst-Robert Curtius, *Die literarischen Wegbereiter des neuen Frankreich* (3rd edition, 1923, Kiepenheuer).

Maurice Gauchez, *Histoire des Lettres françaises de Belgique* (1922, Renaissance d'Occident).

Eugène Montfort, *Vingt-cinq années de vie littéraire* (in course of publication, Librairie de France).

TECHNIQUE

Maurice Grammont, *Le Vers français* (Champion, 1912).

Hugo P. Thieme, *Essai sur l'histoire du vers français* (Champion, 1916).

Jean Hytier, *Les Techniques modernes du vers français* (Presses universitaires, 1923).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

G. Lanson, *Manuel bibliographique* (Hachette).

Hugo P. Thieme, *La Littérature française au XIX^e siècle* (1908).

ANTHOLOGIES

Van Bever and Léautaud, *Poètes d'aujourd'hui* (Mercure).

R. de La Vaissière, *Anthologie poétique du XX^e siècle* (Crès).

G. Walch, *Anthologie des poètes français contemporains* (Delagrave).

G. Pellissier, *Anthologie des prosateurs contemporains* (Delagrave).

APPENDIX C

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL LIST

Note: This list contains only the works entirely characteristic of the most representative authors during the period 1871–1925 and of their precursors. It constitutes, then, a minimum, equally indispensable to the student and to the reader, permitting each to direct his complimentary readings according to the object of his researches or the preference which this first contact will have revealed to him.

Save in a few exceptional cases the date is that of the first complete published edition. The publisher's name indicates the current edition in 1923.

ADAM (Paul). 1862–1920.
La Force (1899). Flammarion.
Irène et les Eunuques (1907). —
Le Trust (1910). —

ALAIN. [Pseud. of Chartier.]
Les Propos d'Alain (1906). Nouvelle Revue Française.

ALIBERT (François-Paul). Born 1873.
Le Buisson ardent (1913). Occident.

ANGELLIER (Auguste). 1848–1911.
A l'Amie perdue (1896). Hachette.

APOLLINAIRE (Guillaume). 1880–1918. [Pseud. of G. de Kostrowisky.]
L'Enchanteur pourrissant (1909). Nouvelle Revue Française.
Alcools (1913). —

ARCOS (René). Born 1881.
Le Bien commun (1919). Au Sablier.

AUDOUX (Marguerite).
Marie-Claire (1910). Fasquelle.

BARBEY D'AUREVILLY (Jules). 1808–1889.
Une Vieille Maîtresse (1851). Lemerre.
Le Chevalier Destouches (1864). —
Les Diaboliques (1874). Crès.
L'Esprit de Barbey d'Aurevilly. Mercure.

BARBUSSE (Henri). Born 1874.
Le Feu (1916). Flammarion.

BARRÈS (Maurice). 1862–1923, of the French Academy.
Le Jardin de Bérénice (1891). Plon.

Du Sang, de la Volupté et de la Mort (1895).	—
Les Déracinés (1897).	Émile Paul.
Amori et dolori sacrum (1903).	—
La Colline inspirée (1913).	—
Un Jardin sur l'Oronte (1922).	Plon.
Bataille (Henry) 1872–1922.	
Poliche (1906).	Fasquelle.
Le Phalène (1913).	Crès.
Baudelaire (Charles). 1821–1867.	
Les Fleurs du mal (1857).	Crès.
L'Art Romantique (1868).	Calmann.
Petits Poèmes en prose (1869).	—
Lettres à sa mère (1918).	Conard.
Becque (Henry). 1837–1899.	
Les Corbeaux (1882).	Fasquelle.
La Parisienne (1885).	—
Benda (Julien). Born 1867.	
L'Ordination (1912).	Émile Paul.
Le Bergsonisme (1912).	Mercure.
Bergson (Henri). Born 1859, of the French Academy.	
L'Évolution créatrice (1908).	Alcan.
Bernard (Tristan). Born 1866.	
L'Anglais tel qu'on le parle (1899).	Calmann.
Triple-Patte (1906).	—
Le Petit Café (1912).	Librairie théâtrale.
Bernstein (Henry). Born 1876.	
Samson (1907).	Fasquelle.
Bertrand (Louis). Born 1866.	
Pépète et Balthasar (1904).	Ollendorff.
Le Mirage oriental (1909).	Perrin.
Saint-Augustin (1913).	Fayard.
Bloch (Jean-Richard). Born 1884.	
Lévy (1912).	Nouvelle Revue Française.
Carnaval est mort (1920).	—
Bloy (Léon). 1846–1917.	
Le Désespéré (1886).	Mercure.
Le Salut par les Juifs (1892).	Crès.
La Femme pauvre (1897).	Mercure.
Mon Journal (1904).	—
Bordeaux (Henri). Born 1870, of the French Academy.	
Les Roquevillard (1906).	Plon.
Bouhélier (St-Georges de). Born 1876.	
Le Carnaval des enfants (1910).	Fasquelle.

BOURGES (Élémir). Born 1852, of the Goncourt Academy.

Le Crépuscule des Dieux (1884). Stock.
Les Oiseaux s'envolent (1893). Plon.
La Nef (1922). —

BOURGET (Paul). Born 1852, of the French Academy.

Essais de psychologie contemporaine (1883). Plon.
Le Disciple (1899). —
L'Étape (1902). —
Le Démon de midi (1914). —

BOYLESVE (René). Born 1867, of the French Academy [Pseud. of R. Tardiveau.]

Mademoiselle Cloque (1899). Calmann.
La Leçon d'amour dans un parc (1902). —

CAILLAVET (G.-A. de). 1869–1915.
Voir de Flers.

CARCO (Francis). Born 1886.

L'Homme traqué (1922). Albin Michel.
Rien qu'une femme (1923). —

CENDRARS (Blaise).

Du Monde entier (1919). Nouvelle Revue Française.

CHARDONNE (Jacques). Born 1884 [Pseud. of Boutelleau.]

L'Épithalame (1921).

CHENNEVIÈRE (Georges) born 1885. [Pseud. of G. Debile.] Stock.

Le Chant du Verger (1923). Au Mouton Blanc.

CLAUDEL (Paul). Born 1868.

Connaissance de l'Est (1900). Mercure.
Le Repos du septième jour (1901). Mercure.
Cinq Grandes Odes (1910). Nouvelle Revue Française
L'Annonce faite à Marie (1911). —
L'Otage (1911). —
Deux Poèmes d'été (1914). —

CLERMONT (Émile). 1880–1916.

Amour promis (1909). Calmann.
Laure (1913). Grasset.

COCTEAU (Jean). Born 1891.

Le Coq et l'Arlequin (1918). La Sirène.

COLETTE (Colette Willy). [Mme Henri de Jouvenel.]

Sept Dialogues de bêtes (1904). Mercure.
La Retraite sentimentale (1907). —
La Vagabonde (1910). Ollendorff.

Coppée (François). 1842–1908, of the French Academy.	
Les Humbles (1872).	Lemerre.
Corbière (Tristan). 1845–1875. [Édouard-Joachim, dit Tristan.]	
Les Amours jaunes (1873).	Messein.
Courteline (Georges). Born 1861. [Pseud. of G. Moinaux.]	
Boubouroche (1893).	Flammarion.
Le Gendarme est sans pitié (1899).	—
La Paix chez soi (1903).	—
Crommelynck (Fernand). Born in 1888.	
Le Cocu magnifique (1920).	La Sirène.
Curel (François de). Born 1854, of the French Academy.	
Les Fossiles (1892).	Crès.
La Nouvelle Idole (1895).	—
La Danse devant le miroir (1914).	—
Daudet (Alphonse). 1840–1897, of the Goncourt Academy.	
Tartarin de Tarascon (1872).	Fasquelle.
L'Évangéliste (1883).	—
Sapho (1884).	—
Daudet (Léon). Born 1868, of the Goncourt Academy.	
Les Primaires (1906).	Fasquelle.
L'Hérédo (1907).	Nouvelle Librairie nationale.
Delarue-Madrus (Lucie). Born 1880.	
Occident (1900).	Fasquelle.
L'Ex-Voto (1922).	—
Descaves (Lucien). Born 1861, of the Goncourt Academy.	
Philémon, vieux de la vieille (1913).	Ollendorff.
(See Donnay).	
Dierx (Léon). 1838–1912.	
Les Lèvres closes (1867).	Lemerre.
Donnay (Maurice). Born 1860, of the French Academy.	
Amants (1895).	Fasquelle.
In collaboration with Descaves: *Oiseaux de passage* (1904).	Crès.
Dorgelès (Roland). Born 1886.	
Les Croix de bois (1919).	Albin Michel.
Duhamel (Georges). Born 1884.	
Vie des martyrs (1917).	Mercure.
Civilisation (1918).	—

Confession de minuit (1920). —
Deux Hommes (1924). —

DUMAS (fils, Alexandre). 1824–1895, of the French Academy.

Une Visite de noces (1871). Calmann.
Francillon (1887). —

LUC DURTAIN. Born 1881. [Pseud. of A. Nepveu.]

Douze cent mille (1922). Nouvelle Revue Française.

ESTAUNIÉ (Édouard). Born 1862, of the French Academy.

Les Choses voient (1913). Perrin.
L'Appel de la route (1922). —

FABRE (Ferdinand). 1830–1898.

L'Abbé Tigrane (1873). Lemerre.

FAGUS, born 1872. [Pseud. of Georges Faillet.]

Fère tranquille (1922). Malfère.

FARGUE (Léon-Paul). Born 1878.

Poèmes (1912). Nouvelle Revue Française.

FARRÈRE (Claude). Born 1876. [Pseud. of Charles Bargone.]

Fumées d'opium (1904). Ollendorff.
L'Homme qui assassina (1907). —
La Bataille (1909). —

FAURE (Élie).

La Roue (1919). Crès.
La Danse sur le feu et l'eau (1920). —

FLAUBERT (Gustave). 1821–1880.

Works. Conard.

FLEG (Edmond). Born 1874.

Écoute, Israël! (Since 1913). Crès.

FLERS (Robert de). Born 1872, of the French Academy.

In collaboration with Caillavet and Arène:

Le Roi (1908). Fasquelle.

FORT (Paul). Born 1872.

Anthologie des ballades françaises (1897–1920). Mercure.
Louis XI, curieux homme (1921). Flammarion.
La Ronde autour du monde (1922). —

FOURNIER (Alain). 1886–1914.

Le Grand Meaulnes (1912). Émile Paul.

FRANCE (Anatole). Born 1844. [Pseud. of A. Thibault], of the French Academy.

Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard (1881). Calmann.
Thaïs (1890). —
Les Opinions de Jérôme Coignard (1894). —

Histoire Contemporaine (1897–1901). —
Les Dieux ont soif (1912). —

FRANCK (Henri). 1889–1912.
La Danse devant l'arche (1912). Nouvelle Revue Française.

FRAPIÉ (Léon). Born 1863.
La Maternelle. Flammarion.

GIDE (André). Born 1869.
Les Nourritures terrestres (1897). Nouvelle Revue Française.
Saül (1902). —
Prétextes (1903). Mercure.
Le Retour de l'enfant prodigue (1907). Nouvelle Revue Française.
La Porte étroite (1909). Mercure.
Les Caves du Vatican (1913). Nouvelle Revue Française.

GILBERT DE VOISINS. Born 1877.
Le Bar de la Fourche (1909). Crès.
La Conscience dans le mal (1921). —

GIRAUDOUX (Jean). Born 1882.
Simon le Pathétique (1918). Grasset.
Suzanne et le Pacifique (1921). E. Paul.
Siegfried et le Limousin (1922). Grasset.

GOBINEAU (Arthur de). 1816–1882.
Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines (1853–55). Didot.
Les Pléiades (1874). Au Sans Pareil.
Nouvelles Asiatiques (1876). Plon.
La Renaissance (1877). —

GONCOURT (de) (Edmond, 1882–1896, et Jules 1830–1870).
Manette Salomon (1867). Fasquelle.
Journal (1887–96). —

GOURMONT (Rémy de). 1858–1915.
Les Chevaux de Diomède (1897). Mercure.
Le Chemin de velours (1902). —
Physique de l'amour (1903). —
Lettres à l'amazone (1914). —
Lettres à Sixtine (1921). —

HAMP (Pierre). Born 1876. [Pseud. of Bourillon.]
Le Rail (1912). Nouvelle Revue Française.
L'Enquête (1913). —
Les Métiers blessés (1919). —

HENRIOT (Émile). Born 1889.
Le Diable à l'hôtel (1919). E. Paul.

HÉRÉDIA (José-Maria de). 1839–1907, of the French Academy.
Les Trophées (1893). Lemerre.

HERMANT (Abel). Born 1862.
Les Transatlantiques (1897). Flammarion.
Monsieur de Couprière (1907). —

HERVIEU (Paul). 1857–1915, of the French Academy.
L'Armature (1895). Lemerre.
La Course du flambeau (1901). —

HOUVILLE (Gérard d'). Born 1875.
[M^me^ Henri de Régnier.]
Poèmes. Mercure.
Le Temps d'aimer (1908). Calmann.

HUGO (Victor). 1802–1885, of the French Academy.
Works. Ollendorff.

HUYSMANS (Joris-Karl). 1848–1907, of the Goncourt Academy.
A Rebours (1884). Fasquelle.
La Cathédrale (1898). Plon.

JACOB (Max).
Le Laboratoire central (1921). Au Sans Pareil.

JALOUX (Edmond). Born 1878.
Fumées dans la campagne (1918). Renaissance du livre.

JAMMES (Francis). Born 1868.
De l'Angelus de l'aube à l'Angelus du soir (1898). Mercure.
Le Roman du Lièvre (1903). —

JARRY (Alfred). 1873–1907.
Ubu-Roi (1896). Fasquelle.

JAURÈS (Jean). 1859–1914.
L'Armée nouvelle (1910). L'Émancipatrice.

JEAN (Lucien). 1870–1908. [Pseud. of L. Dieudonné.]
Parmi les hommes (1910). Mercure.

JOUVE (P.-J.). Born 1887.
Tragiques (1923). Stock.

KAHN (Gustave). Born 1859.
Premiers Poèmes (1887–97). Mercure.

KLINGSOR (Tristan). Born 1874. [Pseud. of Tristan Leclere].
Humoresques (1921). Malfère.

LAFORGUE (Jules). 1860–1887.
Poésies (1886). Mercure.
Maralités légendaires (1887). —

LARBAUD (Valery). Born 1880.
A. O. Barnabooth (1913). Nouvelle Revue Française.
Enfantines (1918). —
Amants, heureux amants (1921). —

LAUTRÉAMONT (Comte de). [Pseud. of Isidore Ducasse.]

Les Chants de Maldoror (1869). — La Sirène.

LECONTE DE LISLE (Charles). 1820–1894, of the French Academy.

Works. — Lemerre.

LEMAITRE (Jules). 1853–1914, of the French Academy.

Les Contemporains (1886–96). — Boivin.
Impressions de théâtre (1888). — —
En Marge des vieux livres (1905). — —

LEMONNIER (Camille). 1845–1913.

Un Mâle (1881). — Ollendorff.

LENÉRU (Marie). 1875–1918.

Les Affranchis (1910). — Hachette.
Journal (1922). — Crès.

LENORMAND (René). Born 1882.

Les Ratés (1919). — Crès.

LEVET (Henry-J.-M.). 1874–1906.

Poèmes (1921). — A. Monnier.

LOTI (Pierre). Born 1850. [Pseud. of Julien Viaud], of the French Academy.

Le Mariage de Loti (1880). — Calmann.
Pêcheur d'Islande (1886). — —
La Mort de Philae (1908). — —
Un Pèlerin d'Angkor (1912). — —

LOUYS (Pierre). Born 1870.

Les Chansons de Bilitis (1894). — Fasquelle.
Aphrodite (1896). — —
Les Adventures du roi Pausole (1901). — —

MAC ORLAN (Pierre). Born 1883. [Pseud. of P. Dumarchais.]

Le Chant de l'Équipage (1920). — Crès.
Malice (1922). — —
La Vénus internationale (1923). — Nouvelle Revue Française.

MÆTERLINCK (Maurice). Born 1862.

Théâtre (1889–96). — Lacomblez.
Le Trésor des humbles (1896). — Mercure.
La Sagesse et la Destinée (1898). — Fasquelle.
L'Oiseau bleu (1909). — —

MAINDRON (Maurice). 1857–1919.

Saint-Cendre (1899). — Fasquelle.

MALLARMÉ (Stéphane). 1842–1898.

Poésies (1887–99). — Nouvelle Revue Française.
La Musique et les Lettres (1895). — Perrin.

Le Coup de dés (1897). —

MAUPASSANT (Guy de). 1850–1893.

Boule de Suif (1880). Ollendorff.

Une Vie (1888). —

Notre Cœur (1890). —

MAURIAC (François). —

Le Baiser au lépreux (1922). Grasset.

MAURRAS (Charles). Born 1868. —

Le Chemin de Paradis (1895). de Boccard.

L'Avenir de l'intelligence (1905). Nouvelle Librairie nationale.

Athènes antique (1918). de Boccard.

MILLE (Pierre). Born 1864.

Barnavaux (1908). Calmann.

Le Bol de Chine (1920). Crès.

MIOMANDRE (Francis de). Born 1880.

Écrit sur de l'eau (1908). E. Paul.

MIRBEAU (Octave). 1848–1917, of the Goncourt Academy.

Le Jardin des supplices (1899). Fasquelle.

Les Affaires sont les affaires (1903). —

Dingo (1913). —

MONTHERLANT (Henry de). Born 1896.

Le Songe (1922). Grasset.

MORAND (Paul). Born 1888.

Ouvert la nuit (1922). Nouvelle Revue Française.

MORÉAS (Jean). 1856–1910. [Pseud. of Papadiamantopoulos.]

Les Stances (1899–1901). Mercure.

MULLER (Charles). 1877–1915. Voir Paul Reboux.

NOAILLES (Anna de). Born 1876.

Le Cœur innombrable (1901). Calmann.

Le Visage émerveillé (1904). —

Les Éblouissements (1907). —

Les Forces éternelles (1920). Fayard.

PAULHAN (Jean). Born 1884.

Le Guerrier appliqué (1919). Sansot.

Le Pont traversé (1921). Camille Bloch.

PÉGUY (Charles). 1873–1914.

Notre Jeunesse (1910). Nouvelle Revue Française.

La Tapisserie de Notre-Dame (1913). —

Note sur M. Bergson (1914). —

PERGAUD (Louis). 1882–1915.

De Goupil à Margot (1910). Mercure.

PHILIPPE (Charles-Louis). 1874–1909.

Bubu de Montparnasse (1900). Fasquelle.

Marie Donadieu (1904). —

Croquignole (1906). —
Charles Blanchard (1913). Nouvelle Revue Française.

PONCHON (Raoul). Born 1848.
La Muse au cabaret (1921). Fasquelle.

PORTO-RICHE (Georges de) of the French Academy. Born 1849.
Le Vieil Homme (1911). Ollendorff.

PRÉVOST (Marcel). Born 1862, of the French Academy.
Les Demi-Vierges (1894). Lemerre.
Lettres à Françoise (1902). —

PROUST (Marcel). Born 1873.
A la Recherche du temps perdu. (Since 1913). Nouvelle Revue Française.

PSICHARI (Ernest). 1883–1914.
L'Appel des armes (1913). Conard.
Le Voyage du centurion (1915). —

RACHILDE. Born 1862. [M^me^ Alfred Vallette.]
La Tour d'amour (1899). Mercure.

REBOUX (Paul). Born 1877. In collaboration with Ch. Muller:
A la manière de . . . (1913). Grasset.

RÉGNIER, (Henri de). Born 1864, of the French Academy.
Les Médailles d'argile (1900). Mercure.
La Cité des eaux (1902). —
Le Bon Plaisir (1902). —
Vestigia flammæ (1921). —

RENAN (Ernest). 1823–1892, of the French Academy.
Works. Calmann.

RENARD (Jules). 1864–1910.
Poil de Carotte (1894). Flammarion.
Histoires naturelles (1896–1904). —

RICTUS (Jehan). Born 1867. [Pseud. de Gabriel Randon.]
Les Soliloques du pauvre (1897). Rey.

RIMBAUD (Jean-Arthur). 1854–1891.
Complete works. Mercure.

ROD (Édouard). 1857–1910.
Michel Teyssier (1892). Flammarion.

RODENBACH (Georges). 1855–1898.
Le Règne du silence (1891). Fasquelle.
Bruges la Morte (1892). Flammarion.

ROLLAND (Romain). Born 1868.

Vie de Beethoven (1903). Hachette.
Jean-Christophe (1904–12). Ollendorff.

ROMAINS (Jules). Born 1885. [Pseud. of Louis Farigoule.]
La Vie unanime (1908). Mercure.
Mort de quelqu'un 1911). Figuière.
Odes et Prières (1913). —
Les Copains (1913). Nouvelle Revue Française.
Europe (1919). —
Cromedeyre le Vieil (1920). —

ROSNY, (Justin born 1859 and Henry born 1856). [Pseud. of J. and H. Boëx.], of the Goncourt Academy.
Le Bilatéral (1887). Fasquelle.
La Guerre du feu (1911). —

ROSTAND (Edmond). 1868–1920, of the French Academy.
Les Romanesques (1894). Fasquelle.
Cyrano de Bergerac (1898). —

RYNER (Han). Born 1862.
Les Paraboles cyniques (1913). Figuière.

SAINTLÉGER-LÉGER. Born 1890.
Éloges (1913). Nouvelle Revue Française.

SALMON (André). Born 1881.
Tendres Canailles (1913). Nouvelle Revue Française.
Prikaz (1919). —

SAMAIN (Albert). 1858–1900.
Au Jardin de l'infante (1893). Mercure.
Le Chariot d'or (1901). —
Contes (1902). —

SCHLUMBERGER (Jean). Born 1877.
L'Inquiète Paternité (1912). Nouvelle Revue Française.

SCHNEIDER (Edouard). Born 1880.
L'Immaculié (1916). Albin Michel.
Le Dieu d'argile (1921). —

SCHWOB (Marcel). 1867–1905.
Le Roi au masque d'or (1893). Crès.
Spicilège (1896). Mercure.
La Lampe de Psyché (1903.) —

SEGALEN (Victor). 1878–1919.
Stèles (1914). Crès.
René Leys (1922). —

SÉVERINE. Born 1855.
Line (1922). Crès.

SOREL (Georges). 1847–1922.

Réflexions sur la violence (1908). Rivière.

Souchon (Paul). Born 1874.

Les Chants du Stade (1923). Au Monde Nouveau

Spire (André). Born 1868.

Versets (1908). Mercure.

Stendhal (de): 1783–1842. [Pseud. of Henri Beyle.]

Complete works (in course of publication). Champion.

Suarès (André). [Pseud. of Yves Scantrel.]

Sur la vie (1912). E. Paul.

Cressida (1913). —

Trois Hommes (1913). Nouvelle Revue Française.

Voyage du condottiere (1914). —

Sully-Prudhomme (A). 1839–1908, of the French Academy.

Les Solitudes (1869). Lemerre.

Le Bonheur (1888). —

Taine (Hippolyte). 1828–1893, of the French Academy.

Works. Hachette.

Tharaud (J.-J.). [Jérôme born 1874, Jean born 1877.]

Dingley, l'illustre écrivain (1902). E. Paul.

La Maîtresse servante (1910). Plon.

Un Royaume de Dieu (1920). —

Toulet (Paul-Jean). 1867–1920.

M. du Paur, homme public (1898). E. Paul.

Les Contre-Rimes (1921). —

Valéry (Paul). Born 1872.

La Soirée avec M. Teste (1896). Nouvelle Revue Française.

Introduction à la méthode de Léonard de Vinci (1920). —

Eupalinos and *l'Ame et la Danse* (1923). —

Poésies (1923). —

Vallès (Jules). 1833–1885.

L'Enfant (1884). Fasquelle.

Varlet (Théo). Born 1878.

La Bella Venere (1921). Malfère.

Aux Libres Jardins (1922). —

Verhaeren (Émile). 1855–1916.

Toute la Flandre (1904–1911). Mercure.

La Multiple Splendeur (1906). —

Choix de poèmes. —

Verlaine (Paul). 1844–1896.

Fêtes galantes (1869). Messein.
Romances sans paroles (1874). —
Sagesse (1881). —
Amour (1888). —
Choix de poésies. Fasquelle.

Vielé-Griffin (Francis). Born 1864.
La Légende ailée de Wieland le Forgeron (1900). Mercure.

Vildrac (Charles). Born 1879. [Pseud. of Ch. Messager.]
Chants du désespéré (1921). Nouvelle Revue Française.

Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (Auguste). 1838–1889.
Contes cruels (1883). Mercure.
L'Eve future (1886) Fasquelle.
Axel (1890). Crès.

Zola (Émile). 1840–1902.
L'Assommoir (1877). Fasquelle.
Germinal (1885). —
L'Œuvre (1886). —

INDEX

Ackermann (Mme.), 26
Adam (P.), 94, 313, 314
Adès, 302
Aicard, 26
Ajalbert, 298, 372
Albalat, 157
Alexis, 34
Alheim (d'), 372
Alibert, 221
Allard, 214
Amiel, 53
Ancey, 51
Andler, 373
Angellier, 146
Annunzio (d'), 286
Apollinaire, 227-230, 240
Aragon, 110
Arcos, 244, 251
Arène (E.), 283
Arène (P.), 27, 322
Arnauld, 200
Arnoux, 309
Artus, 275
Audoux, 332
Augier, 49, 50, 51, 88, 276
Aulard, 181, 374
Aurel, 332

Bachelin, 323
Baju, 95
Baillon, 324
Bainville, 375
Balkis, 331
Balzac, 9, 16, 28, 40, 310
Banville, 6, 17, 26, 27, 102, 284
Barbey d'Aurevilly, 52-55, 60
Barbusse, 305, 306, 309
Bardoux, 373
Barine, 373
Barrès, 14, 62-67, 144, 159, 162-167, 171, 173, 175, 289, 305, 365
Barzun, 244
Bataille, 277, 278, 280
Battifol (Mgr.), 201
Baudelaire, 3, 7, 8, 9, 16, 19, 21, 53, 55, 60, 94, 95, 97, 112, 118, 119, 130, 133, 208, 209, 267, 269, 291, 344, 371, 375
Baudrillart, 375
Bazaillas, 376
Bazalgette, 140
Bazin, 321
Beaunier, 328
Becque, 50, 51, 88, 91, 276, 279, 281
Bédier, 375
Bellaigue, 372
Benda, 342, 343
Benjamin, 305
Benoît, 297
Berger, 309
Bergerat, 27
Bergson, 200, 201-204, 207, 340, 341, 343, 376
Berrichon, 102
Bernard (C.), 12, 376
Bernard (J.-M.), 213
Bernard (T.), 282, 283
Bernstein, 278, 279
Bersier, 374
Berthelot, 376
Bertrand (Ad.), 309
Bertrand (Al.), 231.
Bertrand (L.), 301
Besnard, 285
Besson, 372
Bever (Van), 110, 371
Bidou, 371
Billy, 371
Binet, 376
Binet-Valmer, 328, 329
Bisson, 284
Bloch, 348-349
Bloy, 319-321, 375
Blum, 371
Boisnard, 331
Boissier, 375
Boissière, 299
Bonald, 160
Bonnefon (de), 375
Bordeaux, 321
Bornier (de), 27
Boschot, 372
Bouchor, 27
Bouhélier, 282
Bouilhet, 39
Boulenger (J.), 371
Boulenger (M.), 216
Bourdon, 282
Bourges, 302
Bourget, 12, 14, 53-55, 60-62, 160-162, 164, 180, 282, 336, 337
Boutmy, 375
Boutroux, 376
Bovary, 11
Boylesve, 321
Brémond (Abbe), 375
Breton, 233

Brieux, 51, 89
Brilliant, 316
Bruand, 236
Brunetière, 53, 160, 370
Brunschvieg, 376
Burnat-Provins (Mme.), 216

Caillavet (de), 283
Calvocoressi, 372
Camo, 215
Capus, 88, 89-90, 277
Carco, 225
Cazalis, 26
Cazamian, 373
Cazin, 311
Céard, 34
Cendrars, 253
Chadourne, 297
Chaine, 310
Chantavoine, 372
Charasson (Mlle.), 216
Chardonne, 355
Chateaubriand, 12, 56, 66, 71, 109
Chateaubriant, 323
Chatrian, 76
Chauffier (L.-M.), 371
Chénier, 18
Chennevière, 244, 251
Cherbuliez, 74
Chéreau, 311
Chevalley, 373
Chevrillon, 373
Chuquet, 375
Cladel, 26, 76
Claretie, 375
Claudel, 109, 110, 208, 252-260, 265, 285, 286, 300
Clemenceau, 203, 374
Clermont (E.), 326
Clouard, 213
Cocteau, 235, 312
Cœuroy, 372
Codet, 322
Colette, 333-335
Combette, 299
Comte, 12, 13, 160
Constant, 64, 86
Coolus, 279
Coppée, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 27, 49, 74, 91, 160, 173
Corbière, 94, 96, 97, 98
Couët, 214
Cournot, 376
Courteline, 51, 90, 91, 284
Cousturier, 331
Croisset (de), 279
Crommelynck, 284
Cros, 125
Curel (de), 51, 80-84, 271-273

Daguerches, 298
Dalby, 242
Daudet (A.), 32-34, 50
Daudet (Mme. A.), 375
Daudet (E.), 375
Daudet (L.), 159, 318-319, 375
Debussy, 77, 286, 344, 372
Delahaye, 102, 110
Delarue-Mardrus, 217, 330
Delbousquet, 215
Delluc, 236
Denis, 372
Derème, 224
Derennes, 215, 323
Dermée, 235
Déroulède, 21
Descaves, 276, 314, 315
Deschamps, 95
Desmeth, 324
De Souza, 370
Despax, 220
Deubel, 209
Dévigne, 236
Diderot, 49
Didon (P.), 374
Dierx, 17, 22, 23
Doff, 332
Donnay, 87, 88, 283
Dorgelès, 308
Doumic, 370
Drieu-La-Rochelle, 241
Droin, 214
Drouot, 213
Drumont, 374
Dubech, 214
Du Bellay, 18
Ducasse, 98
Duchêne, 302
Duhamel, 102, 208, 216, 222, 229, 242-244, 248, 285, 307, 308
Dujardin, 210
Dumas (fils), 49, 50, 51, 88, 276
Dumas (père), 3
Dumur, 309
Durkheim, 376
Durtain, 244
Duvernois, 329

Eberhardt, 332
Eekhoud, 324
Elder, 323
Elskamp, 136
Ennery, 50
Erckmann, 76
Esme (d'), 298
Esparbès (d'), 304
Estaunié, 325, 326

Fabre (E.), 89, 281
Fabre (F.), 76
Fabre (H.-J.), 323
Fabri, 236
Faguet, 84, 370, 313
Fagus, 210
Fallens, 284
Faramond, 285

Fargue, 222, 223, 253
Farrère, 296, 297
Fauchois, 285
Faure, 324, 347, 348, 371
Ferrand, 160
Feuillet, 55, 74
Feydeau, 284
Fischer, 316
Flammarion, 25
Flaubert, 3, 10, 11, 13, 16, 28, 40, 53, 301, 310, 337, 375
Fleg, 239
Flers (de), 283
Foch (Mar.), 373
Fosca, 372
Fontainas, 136, 371
Fort, 210-213, 243
Fouillée, 76, 376
Fourest, 224
Fournier, 311
Fourson, 284
France, 67-71, 156, 173-179, 183, 287, 343
Franck, 236, 237, 238, 239, 246
Franc-Nohain, 223
Frapié, 311
Frappa, 309
Fromentin, 75, 372
Funck-Brentano, 375
Fustel de Coulanges, 374

Gabory, 215
Galmot, 297
Galtier-Boissière, 310
Gambetta, 374
Gasquet, 214
Gaudy, 310
Gauguin, 375
Gaultier (de), 158
Gautier (J.), 331
Gautier (T.), 3, 6, 7, 17, 102, 371
Gauvain, 375
Gavault, 279
Géniaux, 328
Geoffroy, 310, 372
Géraldy, 215, 216, 309
Gérard, 285
Ghéon, 286
Ghil, 136
Gide, 158, 285, 331, 343, 354, 359-369
Gignoux, 317
Gilbert, 279
Giraudoux, 234, 329, 330, 359
Glatigny, 17, 26
Gleizes, 372
Gobineau, 337, 338, 339
Gogh (Van), 375
Goncourt (E. and J. de), 28-32, 38, 45, 46, 47, 50, 55, 136, 159, 280, 310, 375
Gorce (de la), 375
Gourmont (J. de), 289
Gourmont (R. de) 95, 96, 98, 99, 110, 118, 128, 147, 153-157
Goyau, 375
Graux, 327
Gregh, 146
Grelou, 62
Guérin, 147
Guiches, 279
Guinon, 279
Guitry, 283
Guyau, 77, 376
Gyp, 316

Halévy (L.), 49, 282
Halévy (D.), 170, 197, 199
Hamp, 349-350
Harry, 331
Havet, 373
Heller, 331
Hémon, 299
Hennique, 34
Henriot, 328
Hérédia (de), 17, 18, 130, 132, 147
Hermant, 279, 317
Hérold, 136
Hervé, 180
Hervieu, 88, 89
Hirsch, 316
Honotaux, 375
Houssaye (A.), 375
Houssaye (H.), 375
Houville (d'), 219, 330
Hovelacque, 373
Hugo, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 21, 103, 137, 201
Huret, 52, 95
Huysmans, 34, 42-45, 55, 96, 114, 116, 125, 159-160, 281
Hyacinthe (P.), 374
Hytier, 241, 374

Indy (d'), 372

Jacob, 227, 230, 231, 240
Jaloux, 327
Jammes, 133, 134, 147, 209, 212-213, 217, 220
Janvier (P.), 374
Jarry, 147
Jaurès, 179-183, 198, 203, 341, 371, 374
Johannet, 202, 204
Josipovici, 302
Joubert, 95
Jouve, 244, 252
Jouvenel (de), 374
Julian, 374

Kahn (G.), 94, 95, 101, 127, 128, 159, 209, 371
Kahn (Z.), 374
Kistemaeckers, 279
Klingsor, 221, 371

Lachelier, 376
Lacretelle, 312
Lafon, 311

Laforgue, 95, 96, 99-101, 129, 209, 215
La Fouchardière, 317
Lahor, 17, 26
La Jeunesse, 371
Lalo, 372
Laloy, 372
Lamartine, 3, 6, 53
Landormy, 372
Lanson, 370
Lantoine, 215
Larbaud, 355-358
Larguier, 220
Lasserre, 371
Lautrémont, 98, 99
Lavedan, 88, 89, 276
Lavignac, 372
Lavisse, 374
Lazare, 203
Léautaud, 371
Leblanc, 297
Le Bon, 245
Leblond, 302
Le Braz, 322
Le Cardonnel, 145
Leconte, 146
Leconte de Lisle, 3, 5-8, 11, 16-18, 20-22, 53, 111, 201
Lefebvre, 241, 309
Lefrance, 373
Le Goffic, 322
Lemaître, 22, 74, 87, 160, 173, 180, 283, 287-288, 370
Lemonnier, 324
Lenéru, 273
Lenormand, 275, 276
Lepelletier, 111
Le Play, 160
Lerberghe (Van), 136
Leroux, 297
Le Roy (Ed.), 376
Le Roy (Eng.), 76
Le Roy (G.), 136
Lesueur, 331
Level, 309
Levet, 224
Lévy-Brühl, 245, 376
L'Herbier, 236
Lhôte, 228, 372
Liard, 376
Lichtenberger (A.), 311
Lichtenberger (H.), 373
Littré, 12
Loisy, 373
Lombard, 302
Lorrain, 135
Loti, 71-74
Lotte, 197
Louys, 210, 293, 294, 296
Loyson, 282
Luchaire, 375
Lugné-Poë, 80

Machard (A.), 311
MacOrlan, 298
Madelin, 375
Maeterlinck, 147, 148-150, 192-196, 236, 285
Magré, 216, 285
Maindron, 303
Maistre (de), 161
Mâle, 372
Malherbe, 144, 208, 214, 267, 309
Mallarmé, 17, 45, 94, 95, 102, 118-127, 129-132, 158, 208, 209, 233, 234, 263, 267, 364, 372
Manuel, 26
Maran, 310
Marcel, 275
Margueritte, 310, 311
Marinetti, 233
Maritain, 371
Martineau, 227
Martin du Gard, 316
Marx, 332
Maspero, 374
Masson, 375
Maublano, 241
Mauclair, 136, 371
Maupassant, 16, 34, 38-42, 45, 50, 52
Mauriac, 326, 327
Maurice, 214
Maurois, 310
Maurras, 12, 81, 143, 159, 167-172, 213, 217, 365
Mazaud, 284
Meilhac, 49, 283
Ménard, 146
Mendès (C.), 17, 21, 22, 27, 104
Mendès (Mme. J.-C.), 216
Mercereau, 236, 244
Mercier, 215
Méré, 282
Mérimée, 3, 9
Merrill, 135
Metzinger, 227
Meyer, 375
Mézière, 373
Michel, 365, 372
Michelet, 15, 33
Mikhaël, 135
Mille, 294, 295
Millerand, 197, 203
Milosz, 253
Miomandre (de), 295
Mirande, 285
Mirbeau, 147, 280, 281
Mockel, 136
Monod, 374
Monsabré (R.-P.), 374
Montesquiou, 16, 145
Montfort, 302
Montherlant (de), 312, 313
Morand, 240, 241, 298, 358
Moréas, 94-96, 142-145, 147, 171, 213, 267, 284

Moreau, 11, 136
Morice, 370
Mortier, 284
Mosca, 11
Moselly, 323
Muhlfeld, 316
Muller, 224
Mun (de), 83, 374
Muselli, 223
Musset, 6, 21, 24, 60

Natanson, 281
Népoty, 279
Nerval (de), 8
Noailles (de), 217-220, 330
Nolhac, 373

Obey, 327
Ohnet, 74
Ollivier, 375

Pailleron, 49
Paris, 375
Pasteur, 376
Paulhan, 358, 359
Péguy, 172, 185, 197-207, 203, 304, 305, 342, 361
Péladan, 302, 333, 371
Pellerin, 224, 226
Pergaud, 209, 332
Pérochon, 323
Pesquidoux (de), 323
Philippe, 254, 345-347, 375
Picard, 285
Pierrefeu (de), 374
Piot, 323
Pirro, 372
Plessys (du), 143
Poincaré (H.), 376
Poizat, 284
Ponchon, 223
Porché, 216, 285
Portail, 242
Porto-Riche (de), 84-87, 275
Pouivillon, 76
Pousot, 324
Prévost, 75
Proust, 351-355, 358
Prudhomme, 75, 371, 372
Psichari, 304, 305
Puget, 241

Quillard, 135

Rachilde, 333
Radiguet, 312
Ramuz, 325
Rappoport, 182
Rauh, 376
Ravaisson, 376
Ravel, 48
Raynal, 275
Raynaud, 95, 135, 143
Reboux, 224, 309
Régnier (de), 18, 94, 130-133, 142, 159, 209, 219, 291, 292
Renan, 3, 12-16, 52, 53, 56, 159, 287
Renard, 45-49, 50
Renouvier, 376
Retté, 135
Réval, 331
Rhaïs, 331
Ribot, 376
Richepin (Jean), 21, 22, 27, 97
Rictus, 236
Rimbaud, 94-96, 101-110, 112, 117, 158, 209, 233, 249, 253
Rivière, 102, 105, 108, 109, 363, 371
Rivoire, 285
Robert, 374
Rochfort, 374
Rod, 77
Rodenbach, 136, 137, 220
Roinard, 135
Rolland, 183-190, 372
Rollinat, 27
Romains, 208, 241-253, 285
Ronsard, 18, 144
Rosny, 303, 324
Rostand (E.), 27, 91-93, 157, 216, 284
Rostand (M.), 285
Roupnell, 323
Rousseau, 16
Royère, 209
Ryner, 290, 291

Saint-Beuve, 3, 8, 370
Saint-Léger-Léger, 253
Saint-Pol-Roux, 135
Saint-Saens, 372
Salmon, 227, 228, 231, 232, 371
Salomé, 220
Samain, 137-139, 209, 220
Sand, 74, 75
Sarcey, 271, 370
Sardou, 49, 276
Sarment, 280
Sauvebois, 371
Savignon, 323
Schlumberger, 283
Schneider, 274
Schuré, 375
Schwob, 151-153, 287, 297
Séailles, 376
Secrétan, 77
Sée, 275
Segalen, 299, 300
Seillière, 373
Sembat, 372, 374
Sertillanges (Abbé), 375
Séverin, 145
Séverine, 332
Seylor, 316
Signoret, 135
Silvestre, 17, 26
Sintral, 312

Sixte, 62
Sizeranne (de la), 372
Sorel (A.), 374
Sorel (G.), 79, 341-343
Sorel (J.), 11, 52
Souchon, 146
Souday, 371
Soulary, 26
Soupault, 241
Spiess, 223
Spire, 237-239
Stendhal, 9, 11, 16, 52, 60, 287, 336-340
Suarès, 343, 344
Sully-Prudhomme, 17, 22-26

Tailhade, 135
Tailhède (de la), 143, 145
Taine, 3, 9, 12-16, 40, 41, 52, 53, 60, 62, 159, 160, 180, 337
Tannery (J.), 376
Tannery (P.), 376
Tarde (A. de), 664
Tarde (G.), 245
Téry, 374
Texte, 373
Tharaud, 288, 289
Thérive, 371
Theuriet, 26, 76
Thibaudet, 124, 371
Thierry, 311
Thureau-Dangin, 375
Tinayre, 330
Toulet, 226, 227
Trarieux, 282

Vaillant-Coutourier, 309
Valéry, 118, 127, 152, 158, 208, 214, 233, 261-270, 372
Vallery-Radot, 375
Vallès, 33, 77, 78
Vallotton, 325
Valois, 342, 345
Vandal, 375
Variot, 322
Vaudoyer, 214
Veber, 279
Vendérem, 279, 371
Verane, 215
Verhaeren, 131, 136, 139-141, 190, 191, 209, 214, 252, 284
Verlaine, 17, 45, 94, 96, 104, 109-118, 129, 130, 209
Verne, 76, 304
Vicaire, 27
Viélé-Griffin, 94, 128-131, 209, 285
Vignes Rouges (des), 309
Vigny, 6, 22, 127
Vildrac, 242, 243, 244
Villetard, 323
Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, 17, 55-60, 94, 95, 125, 153, 287
Vioux, 331
Visan (de), 371
Vivien, 216-217
Vogué (de), 77, 373
Voisins (de), 327
Vollard, 372
Vuillermoz, 372

Wagner (Ch.), 373
Waldeck-Rousseau, 165
Werth, 318, 319, 371
Wilde, 147
Willy, 372
Wolff, 279
Wyzewa (de), 373

Zamacoïs, 285
Zévaès, 203
Zola, 11, 20, 34-38, 44, 45, 50, 52, 53, 55, 157, 173, 306, 310

WOOLWICH
PUBLIC
LIBRARIES.

1 NOV '40